



SAGA SNIPPETS

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4 Essential Elements of Self-Defense

by Jim Wilson
August 1, 2020

If you say "personal defense" to most people, I expect they would immediately start thinking about guns. I like guns and have made my living for my entire adult life with guns, one way or another. But let me suggest a few things, in no particular order, that might be just as important as guns for personal defense.

1. Situational Awareness

How much time do you spend training your eyes and ears to be alert for what is going on around you? It really does take training and practice.

Just yesterday I saw a big, strapping young man walking his dog right down the middle of the street. His ear buds were in and he was bopping to the music. More importantly, he didn't have a clue that anyone was anywhere around until I drove my car right past him.

Once you begin to really see and hear the things that are going on around you, you will begin to see and hear those things that just don't fit and have the potential for danger. Why does that person asking you for the time have to come within touching distance to hear the answer? Why has the same car driven down your street for the third time in an hour? Why does that person approaching your cash register look so nervous?

2. Understanding The Body Language of Anger

People who are overcome with an unreasonable anger, a rage, nearly always give off body language that will clue you in to the danger. Clenching and unclenching the fists, an unwavering stare, rapid, shallow breathing, all may be signs of impending violence.

There are many other such characteristics of a person about to commit violence. Numerous books and online articles have been written about this. Have you read any? Right in line with this is developing skills to diffuse an argument, or confrontation, that is headed south. One of the techniques is called Transactional Analysis. The entire topic is worth studying in depth and will give you tools that you can use to stop a problem before it ever starts.

3. Hardening Any Potential Targets

There are a number of things that can be done to make the average home a harder target for home invasions. And most of them don't cost a lot of

money, while some don't cost anything at all. All of your exterior doors should be solid and have good quality locks on them.

But even good locks don't work unless you take the time to actually lock them. And it is an absolutely superb idea to lock your exterior doors while you are in the house. The last thing you do before bedtime is to make sure that all of your exterior doors and windows are locked. This won't keep a crook out, but it will take time and he will have to make noise to get in.

Another excellent idea is to have good lights installed on the exterior of your house. Many bad guys like to work in the dark and may not be interested if your home is well lit. In line with that, it would be great to have a master light switch in your bedroom that will turn on all of those outside lights.



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As a matter of fact, you should have another switch right beside it to turn on all of the lights inside the house, too. I have friends who turn off their cell phones when they go to bed. I guess it is because they don't want waking them up if it rings. I leave my cell phone on and have it on the nightstand right next to my flashlight and pistol. Should the home invaders cut your phone lines, you can still quickly call 911 for help.

4. Studying Reports of Actual Criminal Attacks

Read the Armed Citizen® columns and study newspaper articles. The important thing is to critique those reports. What did they do right? What did they do wrong? What could have happened? What should have happened? And, by all means, have discussions with your family members about these events.

Through these discussions you will begin to develop a defensive plan that suits you and yours. So, by all means, keep going to the range and practicing with your defensive firearms. Sign up for that defensive shooting class, too. But understand that personal defense is about a lot more things than just guns. The most important defensive tool? Right between your ears.

<https://www.americanrifleman.org/articles/2020/8/1/4-essential-elements-of-self-defense?NRARelatedContent=true>

Study Reports Record Number of Carry Permits in U.S.

<https://www.shootingillustrated.com/articles/2020/10/22/study-reports-record-number-of-carry-permits-in-us/>

by Guy J. Sagi
Thursday, October 22, 2020

A study issued by Crime Prevention Research Center on Sept. 21 reported that the number of concealed carry permits nationwide is now up to 19.48 million, a 34-percent increase compared to 2016's figure. The continued upswing is particularly noteworthy when the number of states that no longer require law-abiding citizens to secure the license is now up to 17.

Roughly 7.6 percent of Americans have a carry permit, according to its findings. Slightly more than 26 percent of them are female and the number of new women outpaced men by 101.2 percent.

There are now five states with more than 1 million people with carry permits. They are Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Texas. Per capita, by qualified adult resident, 28.5 percent of the Alabamians have a license—the top figure in the nation. Indiana claims second-place honors with 18.7 percent and Iowa trails in third.

The cost is even going down. John R Lott and Rujun Wang, the report's authors wrote, "A lot of changes in fees are occurring this year. Arkansas just reduced its fee from \$142.11 to \$91.9 and Washington from \$48 to \$36. Indiana's 5-year license to carry has become fee exempt since July 1, 2020, while Tennessee's 8-year license fee has dropped from \$100 to \$65, effective from January 1, 2020. West Virginia also reduced \$75 fee for a LCDW to \$25, starting on June 1, 2020."

The number of people with carry permits in 1999 totaled 2.7 million. The figure rose to 11.1 million by 2014, but pales by comparison to this year's record-setting 19.48 million.

"At the same time that there has been an exponential growth in permits, there has been a general linear decline in murder and violent crime rates," the co-authors wrote. "Murder rates fell from 5.7 to 5.0 per 100,000, a 12-percent drop. Overall violent crime fell by 29 percent. Meanwhile, the percentage of adults with permits soared by five-fold."

The South African Pin Shooting Federation (SAPSF)

The sport of pin shooting originated in the USA in the 1970s. Richard Davis, a manufacturer of body armour, demonstrated his product by shooting himself on his protected chest and then shooting down a number of bowling pins. He realised that he was on to a good idea and launched the first Second Chance pin shooting match in 1975. Pin shooting was one of the original action shooting sports in which a balance of accuracy, power and speed was required to win.



gun and shotgun events, up to a maximum of 100m for rifle events.

There are events for rimfire and centerfire pistols, double action revolvers, manual and semi-auto rimfire and

centerfire rifles, as well as for pump and semi-auto shotguns, pocket pistols and snubnosed revolvers.

The core of the sport consists of the five Legacy events: 9-Pin Tipover, Stock Gun, Pin Gun, Stock Revolver, Pin Revolver

The minimum number of guns required to participate in the Legacy events are two; typically a 9mmP pistol and a .357 Magnum double action revolver. Most competitors would also use a .40 S&W or .45 ACP pistol. Eight shot revolvers are popular, but hard to get and expensive.

COVID-19 has disrupted the match schedule for 2020, but the 24th annual South African National Pin Shooting Championships will nevertheless be held at various venues in November this year. Distributing the event across space and time is not ideal, but fortunately online technology makes it possible.

More information on the sport go to www.sapinshooting.com

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The first official pin shooting match in South Africa was held in 1996 and today the sport is well established here. There are pin shooting clubs in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Polokwane, Tzaneen, Groblersdal, Newcastle, Mossel Bay and Kroonstad.

The South African Pin Shooting Federation (SAPSF) supports the establishment of new clubs, or will assist existing shooting clubs who wish to offer their members pin shooting as an additional shooting discipline.

SAPSF is accredited with the South African Police Service as a Sport Shooting Organisation and pin shooters can earn Section 16 Dedicated Sport Shooter status.

The sport appeals to a broad range of competitors, including ladies, juniors and persons with disabilities. Many families participate and we literally have shooters aged from eight to eighty!

Pin shooting matches are fast, exciting, visually spectacular and loud. Matches consist of a number of events in which different configurations of bowling pins are shot from tables or rails.

Scoring is simple; the time it takes to shoot all the bowling pins from the surface on which they are placed determines the score. Distances range from 7.6m for hand-

Laser Sights: Red vs. Green



<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2020/10/14/laser-sights-red-vs-green/>

by Brad Fitzpatrick
Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Not too long ago the addition of lasers on firearms was considered a gimmick, but today that thinking has changed. Shooters are learning the value of laser sights, which allow you to shoot more accurately in low-light conditions and from difficult positions where you simply can't raise and aim using traditional iron sights. This widespread acceptance of laser sighting systems has led companies to offer various options for shooters, and none is more basic than the option of selecting a red or a green laser.

But that choice is not as simple as it may initially seem. To understand how lasers work, we must first understand some basic physics. Light travels in waves, part of the electromagnetic spectrum. Different wavelengths in the visible spectrum produce different colors; red light waves range from 620 to 750 nanometers, and green light ranges from 495 to 570 nanometers.

The human eye is better able to recognize colors in the green spectrum, so a green laser is more visible under bright light conditions. It would seem logical, then, that all firearm lasers would be green because they are the easiest to recognize in the broadest range of ambient light conditions.

But there's a catch—building a red laser is relatively simple, requiring only a diode, optics and some basic electronics to construct. Green lasers are more complex. Building a green laser requires a special 808 diode, a second infrared laser crystal and a frequency-doubling crystal, and these parts must be carefully aligned to produce the green laser image. For this reason, green lasers are more complicated, slightly larger and more time-consuming (and thus expensive) to build. When you are purchasing a laser for your firearm there's an inherent tradeoff. If you want a smaller, lighter, cheaper laser, red is best. If you want a laser that is more visible under a wide variety of lighting conditions, you'll need a green laser.

"Side-by-side, a green and red laser will result in a green laser that is easier to see during bright conditions," says LaserLyte's Dusty Gibson. "During low light conditions both are extremely effective. Right now green is about double the price of red with similar features. There is cheaper green, but you will sacrifice brightness or battery life."

Gibson says that new technology is allowing companies to make smaller, less expensive green

lasers, but that many customers are happy with a red laser that is more affordable and more compact. The choice between the two, then, is largely a matter of personal preference and budget, and the decision is ultimately up to the consumer. If your firearm budget is limited but you still want the convenience and added benefit of a laser, then a red model should work just fine under a wide variety of lighting conditions. If you have the money and want a laser that is highly visible even in bright sunlight, then a green laser is probably a better option.

No matter which laser you choose, there are many advantages to adding a laser sight to your firearm. It's a misconception that all dangerous encounters happen in dark conditions, and most shooters primarily practice on well-lit ranges where ambient light is sufficient to use iron sights. In low-light, however, the advantage of a laser becomes quite obvious, and under those conditions both a red and green laser will provide an advantage.

There are more red laser options available today than green, but demand for green lasers has prompted companies to offer more options in this color. No matter which option you choose, the addition of a laser to your personal defense firearm makes sense because it allows you to shoot accurately even under the worst conditions.

Watch this space ...for more interesting firearm snippets

Is Our Freedom For Sale?

<https://www.american1stfreedom.org/articles/2020/10/25/is-our-freedom-for-sale/>

by Dennis Santiago
Sunday, October 25, 2020

The old idea, “If you want to understand what’s really going on, follow the money,” certainly holds true when it comes to gun-control groups. The NRA gets its funding from millions of members and supporters who cherish American freedom. In contrast, as you’ll see here, the vast majority of money fueling gun-control groups comes from a few mega-wealthy individuals who live very protected lives, but don’t think you should have the same security as they do.

Searching publicly available records, we were able to get a good idea of how the gun-control groups are financed. This involved doing forensic accounting work on the three biggest gun-control groups’ political-action committees (PACS): the Michael Bloomberg-funded group Everytown for Gun Safety, the Giffords PAC and the Brady PAC.

Everytown for Gun Safety

The Everytown PAC is the brain-child of one man, Michael Bloomberg. When he was the mayor of New York City, Bloomberg originally founded Mayors Against Illegal Guns. This name was basically scrapped after a lot of mayors turned on the group for simply promoting an anti-gun agenda, and it morphed into Everytown for Gun Safety. Bloomberg’s gun-control ambitions have spawned other groups, but right now the central one is Everytown. It’s an anti-Second Amendment group that creatively tries every tactic it can dream up to diminish our right to keep and bear arms at the local, state and federal levels. The Everytown PAC, organized as a pair of Delaware-chartered corporations with operating offices in New York, is part of this anti-gun machine.

Bloomberg sought the nomination of the Democrat Party for the presidency in 2020, no doubt partly to achieve his goal of diminishing or abolishing the Second Amendment. Despite an almost unlimited budget—Bloomberg’s campaign spent about a billion dollars—his campaign failed miserably. Bloomberg, along with some other prominently wealthy candidates, found out that money won’t necessarily buy popularity for him or his ideas. That failure, however, hasn’t stopped him from continuing to try buy influence via Everytown, which continues to be a well-funded organization.

The Everytown For Gun Safety Action Fund Inc. PAC, or “Everytown PAC” (FEC ID C00640086), is the political-contribution arm of the organization. As of June 30, 2020, the Everytown PAC reported taking in a tiny \$26,600 and spending \$174,000, with \$165,500 of that in contributions to political candidates. The website OpenSecrets.org reported only nine individual contributions greater than \$200 in the 2019-2020 cycle. The two largest individual contributors were Kevin Rowe of Santa Fe, N.M., with the firm K Rowe Investments LLC, making a total contribution of \$7,333, and one by Kathleen McGrath of Encino, Calif., who is with the entertainment production company Bad Robot, for \$5,000.

But that is not the interesting thing about the Everytown PAC. What’s fascinating is the role it plays in moving large sums around for Bloomberg. During the last 12 months, as this was being written, there have been a lot of money transfers between the Everytown For Gun Safety Action Fund Inc.’s sister PAC, the Everytown For Gun Safety Victory Fund (Everytown Victory Fund) and Mike Bloomberg 2020—his presidential campaign fund. The deck-chair shuffling looks to be about \$15 million sent from the Action PAC

to the Victory Fund—these were booked as contributions starting in 2019. This coincided with \$4.4 million going back from the Victory Fund to the Action PAC in the form of a vendor payment. Somewhere in there, the Action PAC also sent \$3.2 million to the Bloomberg presidential campaign. As much as it forensically intrigues me, exactly what income statement, balance sheet, tax management, management controls or FEC reporting purposes this served, I am not certain. But what is clear is that these internal transactions were the largest movements of money within the amalgam of Bloomberg’s political money piles. And this is the smaller of the pair of Everytown’s funds.

The much larger Everytown For Gun Safety Victory Fund (Everytown Victory Fund) (FEC ID C0068865) is the attack-dog component of the Everytown organization. It is the one that does all the negative advertising seeking to undermine the Second Amendment. It is a full-fledged PAC that does not contribute to any campaigns, but still takes in very big donations.

In addition to Bloomberg’s personal largess, OpenSecrets.org reports that the Victory Fund had 857 large donors, as this was being written, in the 2019-2020 cycle. The most-substantial donor was Steve Ballmer from Bellevue, Wash., of the Ballmer Group, better known as the former CEO of Microsoft and the owner of the L.A. Clippers basketball team. He donated \$7 million in April 2020. The third-largest donor to the Everytown Victory Fund in this cycle was Cynthia Simon Skjodt, who donated \$750,000. All of the other contributions were smaller.



Continued...Is Our Freedom For Sale?



This means three people—Bloomberg, Ballmer and Skjodt—accounted for almost \$23 million of the \$24.6 million the Victory Fund reported taking in for 2019-2020.

They have around \$19 million available in the Victory Fund to engage in independent-expenditure PAC activity. That is code for “election influencing.” As of June 30, 2020, the Everytown Victory Fund reported having spent \$200,000 on independent expenditures, all of it in negative ads against Republican candidates.

In terms of specific expenses by the Everytown Victory Fund, they are not quite pedestrian. The unclassifiable data and technology line items far exceed every other expense item on the books. Then again, if one’s goal is to manufacture an echo-chamber narrative designed to use the mainstream media and social media to push your agenda for the 2020 election, maybe that is how much it costs.

Unfortunately, these political arms of Everytown are not charities and therefore cannot be examined or rated by Charity Navigator or similar organizations. However, it is notable that the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, which is a 501(c)(3) organization, gets only one star from Charity Navigator in the Accountability & Transparency category.

Taking a step back from Bloomberg’s machine, I cannot help but think that all this infrastructure was meant for far more than a single-issue campaign like gun control. This is a machine on the scale of winning a presidency—something that slipped through Michael Bloomberg’s fingers, but which he’s still trying to win in other ways.

Giffords PAC

The Giffords PAC (FEC ID C00540443), headquartered in

Washington, D.C., is an entirely different political machine. It, too, is not a charity and thus cannot be rated by Charity Navigator or similar organizations. However, other sources show that as of June 30, 2020, Giffords had taken in \$8 million in receipts and spent \$6 million, with around \$2.8 million in reserve.

Two things immediately stand out about this PAC. First is how narrowly and sparingly it spends its money. As this was being written, it had made a mere \$198,000 in campaign contributions and spent \$1.4 million of its independent-expenditure PAC money against one campaign: Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) who, at press time, was in a tight race with Democrat John Hickenlooper, a man who wants to deeply restrict our Second Amendment rights. This is considered to be a key race for control of the U.S. Senate. The other thing about the Giffords PAC is the nature of its expenses. They are, compared to the frugality of Everytown, astronomical. The administrative, fundraising, media, salary and miscellaneous expenses of this group take up the largest use of its donations.

Examination of the lists of the donor base of the Giffords PAC reveals that it had, as this was being written, 3,473 contributors who gave \$200 or more. Only three people had donated more than \$10,000 to the Giffords PAC in the 2019-2020 cycle. It’s unclear whether these people donated believing in the gun-control cause of Giffords or if they are aware that around 80 cents on the dollar they donate is either going into operating expenses or to the Washington, D.C., political machine.

Exactly what kind of expenses? Let’s start with the action spending end first. The disclosure data published on OpenSecrets.org indicates that by midyear, Giff-

ords had made around \$252,500 in campaign contributions and spent a meager \$3,900 on campaign-related expenses. On the internal expense side, the PAC had racked up a \$198,300 bill for strategy and research, \$1.3 million in media buys, \$1.2 million for staff salaries, \$579,300 in administrative costs, \$2 million on fundraising and \$639,800 in unclassifiable costs. The list of “vendors” reads like a list of the left’s most-powerful operatives.

Somewhere in all of it, Giffords PAC claims these expenditures amount to an independent spending of around \$1.4 million aimed at defeating Sen. Gardner. The point to note here is this is more about flipping the U.S. Senate than it is about the PAC’s stated effort to promote gun-control.

Brady PAC

Finally, the Brady PAC (FEC ID C00674093) is a gun-control organization most NRA members will recognize. One of the oldest anti-gun lobby groups, the Brady Center for the Prevention of Gun Violence, appeared on the scene in the 1970s. It was originally named the National Council to Control Handguns, then Gun Control Inc., and, for now, it goes by Brady.

It is a poor PAC compared to the first two described in this article. As of June 30, 2020, the Brady PAC had taken in \$2,463,048 in donations and spent \$2,372,045 in expenses. They had just over \$100,000 in reserves. Fifty percent of the Brady PAC’s receipts, around \$1.1 million, have gone into political campaign contributions. Expenses are about what you would expect, with salaries accounting for about 10%, and most of the rest going to the out-sized media budget for web ads that seems to be the money pit of

Continued...Is Our Freedom For Sale?

OpenSecrets.org show recurring donations by the same small group of people on an ongoing basis. They are literally the pulse of this PAC.

What This All Means

Looking at these three anti-gun organizations and the nuances of their finances, we see that Brady is the ode to the past. They lobby for gun-control legislation and pay lawyers to go to the courts to take our freedom away. Giffords is an

expression of establishment politics. It exploits wedge issues for fundraising purposes. Its main purpose is to feed the establishment. Everytown's financial structure, meanwhile, is highly concentrated. When you follow the money, it leads to an elitist movement that seeks to impose its will upon ordinary people. To Bloomberg, America's 100-million-plus gun owners are an archetype of the kind of rugged individualism that

cannot be allowed to exist in an elite nanny-state world.

They spend money, a lot of money—Bloomberg is spending at least \$60 million in this election cycle—to convince people that their freedom is a problem they need to give up.

Dennis Santiago is a global risk and financial analyst with 40 years of national policy experience.

Learn to Practice Situational Awareness

by Sheriff Jim Wilson
Friday, October 16, 2020

Those of us who teach don't have too much difficulty helping a student learn to shoot well enough to defend themselves. It is also relatively easy to teach a student to do speed loads and clear malfunctions. The real challenge is trying to teach that student to spot a criminal attack early enough that there is time to prepare and respond.

Too many people just don't pay enough attention to what is going on around them. And then, in many cases, they may see it but not understand what is happening. This is the reason that so many criminal attacks seem to occur at such close range. In most cases, if the citizen were more observant and understood what was being seen, the criminal would never get that close.

Citizens will often look at a police video and wonder why the officers were using the level of force that they were when it seems to unnecessary. The citizen is seeing it, but not from the same level of experience and training that the officers are. People who have survived a robbery, rape or assault, are sel-

dom difficult to convince that they need to take a greater interest in their personal safety. But, that is a high price to pay for education and it assumes that the citizen will survive — which, as we know, is sadly not always the case.

The first step is to force yourself to be more observant of things that are going on around you. When walking out of the restaurant, into the dark parking lot, you are scanning the area instead of listening to your friend's funny joke. You are looking for things and people that appear to be out of place: that group of what appears to be street punks standing next to the cars in this high-end eatery; the person who is looking at you but turns away when he sees that you've noticed; the guy coming out of the darkness, asking for directions.

The person who has some street experience has a leg up on understanding the criminal mind because he has already seen crooks in action. But, the average citizen can also increase his knowledge on the subject without having to learn by being a victim. I highly recommend getting some books, videos or training classes on body language because the crook will

nearly always give himself away if you know what you are looking at.

In addition, take the time to study reports of actual criminal attacks. What was the first clue that a victim should have seen? What mistakes did the victim make that set him up for the attack? It will often become clear that the victim simply wasn't paying attention.

I live in an area that has a lot of rattlesnakes, yet I've never been bitten. Early on, I learned what rattlesnakes looked like and what they are capable of. Then, having a healthy respect for those rascals, I determined to be extremely observant and careful. I can teach you to shoot and run your gun, but I can't make you pay attention to what is going on around you. Hopefully, you will teach yourself to watch and understand those snakes that walk among us.

<https://www.shootingillustrated.com/articles/2020/10/16/learn-to-practice-situational-awareness?NRARelatedContent=true>

CCW Gun Maintenance: 7 Must-Know Tips

<https://www.americanrifleman.org/articles/2020/5/1/ccw-gun-maintenance-7-must-know-tips/?NRARelatedContent=true>

by Jim Wilson
Friday, May 1, 2020

One thing's for sure: Good-quality defensive handguns aren't cheap. The good news is that, when properly maintained, they can last for years. Maintenance of your defensive handgun should be considered a critical component to your overall defensive plan. Here are some ideas that will get you headed in the right direction and help guarantee that, should you ever be faced with a violent criminal attack, your handgun will function properly.

Tip No. 1: Know Your Field-Stripping Procedure

Regardless of the type of handgun you use for personal defense, you should be able to field-strip it. Field stripping doesn't mean that the gun has to be taken completely apart, just stripped down so that it can be properly cleaned.

Just about every handgun comes with an owner's manual that explains how to accomplish this. If you purchased a used gun, you can generally contact the manufacturer for an owner's manual, or even find it online. Failing those options, ask a qualified gunsmith or firearm instructor to show you how it is done.

Tip No. 2: Recognize and Inspect for Wear on Components

With the modern ammunition available today, it is really not critical that a firearm be cleaned after each shooting session. However, regularly cleaning your defensive handgun is an excellent habit. Besides keeping the gun clean and in perfect operating condition, the cleaning process gives you the opportunity to ex-



amine the gun for worn parts or any other problem that might arise.

The middle of a gunfight is not the time to find out that your defensive handgun requires a trip to the gunsmith. Owner's manuals, online sources and gunsmiths can all advise on the best way to clean your particular gun.

Tip No. 3: Learn Proper Lube Application

Critical to proper gun maintenance is lubrication. It has been my observation that most people fall into one of two categories: either they don't lubricate their guns at all or they use far too much lubrication. A few drops of light oil on specific areas of your handgun will suffice.

Too much lubrication attracts dirt, burnt powder particles and lint, all of which may adversely affect the reliability of the firearm. The climate that you live in will dictate how much and how often the gun should be lubricated. I try to do this about once a month, whether the handgun has been fired or not.

It is also important to realize that just any oil won't do as a gun lubricant. Motor oil, sewing machine oil and penetrating oil are not made for guns. It is important to use a light oil that is especially designed for firearms and does not get gummy over time.

Tip No. 4: Keep Track of Recoil-Spring Life

For those who shoot a semi-automatic pistol, it is also important to periodically replace the pistol's recoil spring. Springs will often weaken when the pistol has been fired quite a bit. For example, it is recommended that the recoil spring in a 1911 be changed out somewhere between 2,000 and 5,000 rounds.

A couple of years ago, a 1911 gunsmith told me that he changed out his recoil spring every 1,000 rounds. Since recoil springs are not very expensive, I decided to follow this practice and believe that it is one reason that my .45-cal. semi-autos remain so reliable.

Tip No. 5: Toss Malfunctioning Magazines

Semi-automatic shooters also need to keep any eye on the pistol magazines. Many pistol malfunctions can be directly traced to damaged or worn magazines. It is best to keep a supply of good, quality magazines on hand. For goodness sake, if a magazine begins to cause malfunctions, just throw it in the nearest garbage can and get a new one.

Too many folks say, "Well, I will just keep it for my practice sessions." This is simply a recipe for getting the bad magazine mixed up with the good ones. Again, a gunfight is not place to find this out. Bad magazine? Throw it away!

Tip No. 6: Inspect and Cycle Out Your Self-Defense Ammunition

It is also a good idea to replace the defensive ammo that you are carrying on a regular basis. I do this about three times each year. I use the old ammunition for practice and stoke the gun and extra magazines with fresh ammunition.

Continued...CCW Gun Maintenance: 7 Must-Know Tips

When you are loading your gun and spare ammo carrier with new ammunition, take the time to examine each round for damage. Over the years, I have come across about half a dozen rounds of factory ammunition that either had a damaged case or the primer upside down. It is rare, but it does happen.

Tip No. 7: Inspect and Wipe Down Your CCW Gun Every Day

When you wear a handgun every day, as I have done for more years than I care to count, they are subject to external wear and rust. My solution has been to keep an oily rag (again, gun oil, please) on the nightstand. When I take the gun off at the end of the day, I take just a moment to wipe it off with the rag.

For this reason, I have guns that are 40 and 50 years old that look like they are almost new. This practice also gives me a daily opportunity to examine the gun for any problems such as loose sights, screws and stocks.

If all of this sounds like I baby my defensive handguns, then you are reading me correctly. I can tell you from experience that a defensive handgun in good shape is a critical part of any defensive plan. Take care of it, and it will take care of you.