

4 Types Of Firearms For Your Survival Needs

If you are interested in being a good prepper, chances are you also have some ideas about what that means.

In terms of [guns](#), the enormous interest in the topic may lead you to believe you have to own as many guns as possible, be a professional marksman, have military or law enforcement experience, and be an avid hunter. The truth is you don't need to have an arsenal in your home or in dozens of caches hidden away in any area that you may have to bug out to. You do, however, need to be able to meet certain needs and have sufficient capacity and training to hit whatever you are aiming at using the fewest number of bullets. While there is no exact number of guns you should or should not own, you can arrive at a minimum to maximum range that will work for you and your family or survival group.

While quantity is not necessarily a factor, good quality guns that will meet your survival and defensive needs are essential. This includes guns being used for home and self defense as well as hunting for food. Some people also feel that guns are a necessary defense against various kinds of invading forces that break through military and national guard personnel. On the other side of the equation, no matter how much anti-gunners scream about AR and similar platforms, US citizens simply cannot get their hands on the kind of weapons that will function long enough or in appropriate capacity to meet these challenges.



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Now that we've taken staving off an attack from an invading force off the survival table, what's left?

You can still make sure that you have the right type of guns and ammo on hand to manage home defense against a limited number of relatively untrained to moderately trained criminals, self defense in situations where you are alone or unable to get help from the police, and hunting animals for food. All of these survival gun needs are very important and choosing the right number of weapons can, in fact, make the difference between life and death for you and your loved ones.

Quite frankly, if you are collecting large numbers of guns just to have them or to show your "love for guns", you are wasting both your time and your money. Prepping for disasters is about many things and requires a balanced outlook that enables you to manage multiple areas of need at one time. Overall, I'd say guns and security matters are somewhere between 5 and 10% of all the activities and budgeting for survival needs. If you are spending more than that, you need to take some time out and refocus so that you can embrace other skill sets and supplies.

When it comes to stockpiling weapons you must use common sense. The more types of firearms in the stockpile, the more ammunition you will need for maintenance, training, and for a time of need. This can be very expensive and take up a lot of storage space, not to mention the cleaning kits, spare parts, and other accessories that you will need for both responsible

and safe gun ownership. Furthermore, training with one gun doesn't mean you can manage all guns that you come across. Each gun has its own safety system, felt recoil, and other tendencies that you must know in vivid detail. It takes a lifetime of dedication to master hundreds of weapons. You are much better served by limiting yourself to just a few guns and mastering them to the best of your ability.

When picking ammunition for the self-defense, home defense, hunting, and other survival needs, it is to your advantage to use the same calibers as the local police/sheriff departments, the military, and what is popular in your area for hunting and recreation. Usually, gun shops and sporting goods stores will carry extra ammo in popular hunting calibers, as well as for active duty military, law enforcement personnel, and local recreational shooters. Since less popular rounds will be made in lower quantities, you will have a harder time finding them in a time of need. On the other hand, popular ammo types are made in much larger numbers, so you will have a better chance of finding some for trade or barter.

Some Other Reasons Why a Fewer Number of Guns is Better

As simple as it may sound, the more guns you have, the harder it is to keep others from knowing what you have. There is absolutely no point to keeping a gun around for survival needs if you aren't going to practice with it at the range, keep it clean, and take proper care of it. In a situation where larger numbers of guns will draw attention, you may still be able to keep a few non-descriptive looking weapons around that will also serve you well in a time of need.

If your weapon stockpile is very large and extensive, it can also serve as an impediment in situations where you know you need to bug out. You are better off only having one or two guns that you can travel with easily rather than have to deal

with regretting leaving so many other guns and ammo behind. Even if you manage to bury or sufficiently hide your excess guns, they may be discovered or damaged before you can retrieve them.

Best Firearm Types for Survival Needs

When choosing any firearms for yourself or family members, it is very important to make sure they can actually use the guns effectively. While you may be able to easily manage the recoil of a larger caliber firearm, or have arms long enough to handle a standard sized rifle, the same may not be true for other family members. You must also listen and take into account the personal preferences of each family member. No matter whether disabilities must be overcome or other limitations, taking the time to address these factors will save everyone a lot of pain later on.

Self and Home Defense

There are two types of guns you need for self defense. First, you will need a handgun (pistol or revolver) that you can carry with you in public. It is best to have a concealed weapons permit rather than advertise you are armed. You should also have either a rifle or shotgun for home and property defense. You can also use a handgun in a household setting, especially in close quarters. Brandishing a rifle or shotgun in your home can still be far more intimidating to criminals. This is one of the few places where the size of the gun being brandished and the sound it makes may still have at least some deterrent effect.

Insofar as handguns go, revolvers are excellent handguns for beginners or individuals that have handicaps. These weapons are very straight forward and simple to use. There aren't any safeties or magazines to deal with that can confuse the shooters. It is mostly a matter of personal choice which gun

you choose to carry. That being said, with two exceptions, try to stay away from handguns that have less than a 4 inch barrel, as they will not have good accuracy at distances of interest to you. It will also be to your advantage to get a revolver that holds six rounds instead of just 5. That one additional bullet can save your life, especially if you are on the verge of panic and losing your ability to fire as accurately as possible.

For self defense, I recommend the following revolver calibers:

- .357 Mag. revolvers that shoot both .38 Special and .357 mag are especially ideal for beginners and disabled shooters. These ammo types have a fairly good stopping power without the kind of felt recoil that you would get from higher calibers.
- .44 Mag.- For those shooters that want to shoot mid level ammunition, the .44 mag. revolver shooting .44 Special rounds would be a good place to start. You can fire a 200 grain plus bullet with a mild recoil and good accuracy. If you can handle a little more speed and recoil then fire the .44 mag. ammunition.
- 45ACP – The .45ACP revolver is a mid level combination with good accuracy and relatively mild recoil.
- .45 Long Colt (LC) and .410 shot shells – The .45 LC, and .410 shot shell revolvers can be classified as heavy recoil handguns. They are both excellent rounds for self defense. If you purchase a multi-caliber revolver, then you can choose which ammo works better for you. Depending on the gun model, you may also be able to load all the same ammo type or mix and match. This is distinct advantage for a defensive and survival weapon in times when you may not be able to find enough rounds to fully reload. Unlike other revolvers, you can go down as far as a 3 inch barrel length without extensive sacrifice of accuracy. A cylinder that holds 5 rounds should also be sufficient for your needs since the

stopping power of even one bullet hitting an adversary should be enough to neutralize the threat.



Pistols

If you do not want to go past revolvers, that is entirely your choice. Bear in mind, however, that modern pistols can shoot faster, carry more ammunition in the magazines, and can give you an edge in shoot outs. It will be worth your while to devote at least some range time to trying out pistols that are available for rent. As with working you way up the caliber scale with revolvers, start with low caliber pistols and work your way up. If you like the feel of a .22, then by all means move up to higher calibers. From there, do some research on how pistol cleaning differs from revolver cleaning. Make sure that you understand what is involved so that you can take proper care of your gun.

One of the biggest advantages to carrying a pistol is the number of rounds that can be fit into a magazine. Depending on the gun model, you may be able to get single or double stack magazines. If you want double the amount of ammo and don't mind a thicker, heavier grip, then choose a pistol that takes double stack magazines. If your hands are smaller, or you want

a lighter weight weapon, then choose a model that uses a single stack magazine. To compensate for less bullets, you will have to train more on fast reloading techniques. Both magazine types will still take less time than required for reloading a revolver.

When it comes to self defense pistols, I don't recommend going with anything smaller than a compact. While sub compact pistols weigh less, they have greater felt recoil which will increase the amount of time required to follow up on shots. In addition, sub compact guns also produce a large flash of light with each round fired. If you must shoot at night or low light, these bright flashes can destroy your night vision and leave you unable to see your attacker well enough to shoot or defend yourself.

The following pistol calibers would be suitable to use as defensive pistol rounds:

- The .380ACP is the smallest caliber that I would use as a self-defense round under normal conditions. For someone that is disabled, this may be the only pistol round that can be fire safely. This round is usually used in very small or compact pistols. Because of it's small size it is slightly under powered. You will have to compensate for these problems with excellent shot placement, and you may also need more than one shot to stop an attacker. The pistol should have a barrel length of at least 2 to 3 inches and should carry at least 6 + 1 rounds.
- The 9mm is a good defensive gun if you use the right powder charge, case, and bullet design. Just remember not to exceed the range the gun is capable of firing safely. Another advantage is this ammunition is used by most militaries around the world, many police/sheriffs departments, and US Government Civil Service Law enforcement Agencies. Choose a barrel length between 3 to 5 inches and a magazine capacity of at least 15+1

rounds.

- The .40 caliber has a very heavy recoil and muzzle flash that can cause some shooting problems like flinching or blinking when the handgun fires. I would not recommend these pistols to new or beginning shooters. Advanced shooters should be able to shoot these pistols well. The pistol should have a barrel length of 4 to 6 inches and a magazine capacity of at least 13 + 1 rounds.
- The .45ACP pistol (1911) is one of the oldest and most reliable handguns ever developed. The recoil can be a little heavy. In the hands of an experienced shooter, it is quite controllable. Modern .45ACP pistols come in both DA/SA or SA only. The .45ACP pistol has two types of magazines. The first is the single stack magazines that holds 7 or 8 rounds +1. The second magazine is the double stack magazines that can hold 10 to 14 rounds +1. The compact pistol usually comes with a 4 inch barrel and the full size pistol comes with either a 5 or 6 inch barrel. Some people prefer to carry and shoot the sub compact .45ACP pistols even with their very heavy recoil and muzzle flash. While the compact models can be used for self defense, I still prefer the full size .45ACP pistols.

Rifles and Shotguns

Unless you wind up in a situation where total social collapse means there are no law enforcement, national guard, or military patrols available, there is no need to carry a rifle or shotgun in public for self defense. On the other hand, rifles and shotguns are very important for home and property defense. They are also the best weapons for hunting; which gives them the kind of dual purpose ideal for prepper stockpiles.

As with handguns, it is very important to store shotguns and rifles safely. Keep them locked up or with trigger locks on

them to prevent children from getting a hold of the gun and firing it by accident. If you feel that you must keep the weapon loaded, trigger locks can also prevent home invaders from getting the gun before you reach it and turning it against you. It's better to own firearms for defensive purposes and never use them. Than not to have them when you need them the most.

Shotguns

When choosing a shotgun for home defense, consider the following:

- It should be dependable and reliable. Choose a good quality manufacturer and do your research on models to learn more about past recalls as well as any other issues that have been discovered by others who own a specific model.
- The shotgun should be easy to operate for you and others who may need to use it. If you or a family member needs a less complex shotgun, then you may need to buy two or more models to meet individual needs.
- The gun must fit the shooter. There is no point to purchasing a gun that you cannot shoulder properly, or one where you cannot reach the trigger. As with operational features, it may be necessary to purchase more than one shotgun so that everyone who needs to shoot for home defense can do so.
- Consider felt recoil. Even though shotguns can, and often are easier to aim, that doesn't mean you won't miss in a situation where your life is in danger. The more controllable the recoil, the better chance you have of recovering quickly and positioning accurately for the next shot.

Pump action and automatic shotguns will both serve you well. Some people prefer automatic shotguns because they believe you only have to load the gun and pull the trigger in order for it

to fire. This may or may not be the way each shot shell firing leads to the next. The cycling of an automatic depends on the propellants in the shot shell. There must be enough energy produced by the shell to properly cycle the action to load the next round. Shooting light loads can cause a short stroke that can jam the action.

On the other side of the equation, pump action shotguns are less inclined to jam because you must use the pump to advance the next shell into the receiver. Most home defenders prefer a smooth bore pump action shotgun for its distinctive sound as a shotgun round is chambered. At the very least, less experienced criminals, and even those with a good bit of training will give some pause because they know this sound means they are about to be shot and may lose their life.

The other nice thing about the pump action shotgun is its ability to shoot just about any shell with any load that will fit safely in the shotgun shell. It's also safe to shoot light loads in a smooth bore pump action shotgun. These loads can be training rounds, beanbag rounds, rubber shot, and tear gas rounds, just to name a few. In most cases it's easier to clear a jam with a pump shotgun than it's with an automatic because you can manually work the action back and forth.

You can also choose shotguns with rifled barrels. These guns will give the advantage of putting a spin on the projectile, which will improve accuracy over a smooth bored weapon. Unfortunately, they are mainly designed to shoot just slugs. In a time of need where you may need to use different kinds of ammo, this can be a disadvantage.

If you are in good health and have no handicaps, I recommend using 12 gauge with 00 buckshot for home defense shotguns. Individuals with handicaps or a small build should use a 20 gauge with 00 buck shot because of its lighter recoil. Regardless of the ammo type or gun model, it is best to choose a shotgun that holds at least 5 – 9 rounds loaded into the

ammo tube. You will also need an ammo belt that is fully loaded. Be sure to practice reloading on the run from the belt and still be able to hit what you are aiming at.

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Rifles

For the most part, you should choose a rifle that can take over where shotguns leave off. This means they should have an effective range of 300 to 500 yards. Bear in mind the range of the gun and the range capacity of the shooter are two different things. Even the best rifle with the best scope will do nothing for a shooter that can't shoot at different distances and under different circumstances with good accuracy.

The two most popular and basic platforms for rifles in the in the US are the AR-15 and the AK-47/74. Both of these platforms are excellent for perimeter defenses. Bear in mind, however, they have some limitations in buildings where the bullets can pass through doors, walls, or windows. They are not the ideal weapon for close quarters or situations where you do not have direct sight on the areas where the bullets may land. Remember, never aim your gun at something unless you don't mind destroying it. As useful as these guns are for mid range distances, they can also fool you if you forget about accurate measuring of these distances. In a dangerous situation where you are already stressed out, the loss of accuracy or ability to judge those distances means it is possible to kill or critically injure innocent individuals in other parts of the house, outside of the house, or in other outside buildings.

Long Range Sniper Rifles

There are several types of rifles and ammunition that could be use for long range perimeter defenses. The .308 Winchester round has the advantage of being easy to obtain because it is

used by the military, sportsmen, and police. This makes it a versatile round that you can also use for hunting in a time when no other food sources are available.

Bolt action rifles are very accurate at long ranges, but have a slow firing rate. Semi-auto rifles in .308 have very good accuracy at long range and a faster rate of fire. The type of rifle you choose will be a personal choice.

Firearms for Hunting

Depending on the size of the game you are hunting, you can go down as far as .22 caliber handguns and long guns to .308 rifles. Even if you have no need to hunt at this time, it would be to your advantage to take up sport or competition shooting. This will give you a chance to improve your accuracy as well as become familiar with the guns that may be needed later on for survival needs. Do not forget to include safe hunting drills and shoot/don't shoot scenarios. While many hunters were raised with strict protocols for hunting in groups, you never know what will happen with less experienced people in a time of need. As a result, I would say that shoot/don't shoot drills are every bit as important for modern hunters as they are for those interested in guns for self defense needs.

Here are some guns that you may want to consider for hunting needs:

- Handguns – As with defensive shooting, the model and design will be mostly a matter of personal choice, budget, and your view of the manufacturer's quality. For hunting purposes, however, the best ammo rounds range from the .22 caliber long rifle on the low end to the monster S&W .500 on the high end. Because these guns have much less stopping power, or are too heavy, they make a poor choice for defensive weapons. Remember, the objective of hunting is to take the animal with one shot

and a minimal loss of meat and hide. Larger rounds will not improve your accuracy and will increase the amount of waste to unacceptable levels. That being said, never use an undersized round to take game that requires something bigger.

- Shotguns – Depending on the type of game, you may want to use 10 12, 20, 16, 28 gauge, or the .410 shot shell. Today, there are people that believe a shotgun that isn't a pump action or a semi-auto is old fashioned and virtually useless for anything other than hanging on a wall. Double barreled, single barreled, lever action, and the bolt action shotguns have good accuracy and distance features that make them still useful for todays hunting.
- Rifles – You can choose between guns that shoot either rimfire or centerfire rounds. Rimfire ammunition has it's primer around the rim of the brass. Centerfire ammunition has it's primer in the center of the brass. Rimfire ammunition is usually used on .22 magnum or smaller ammunition because of the weaker cases. Centerfire cases are under greater pressure than the rimfire cases because a stronger primer is needed to ignite the powder charge. Regardless of the ammo type, you can find bolt action, semi-auto, single shot, and pump action rifles that will utilize one or the other. From a survivalist hunter perspective, it would be to your advantage to have at least one rifle that shoots centerfire and one that shoots rimfire rounds. This will make it easier to find ammo in a time of need.
- Black Powder Muzzle Loaders – As the name implies, these firearms are loaded from the muzzle instead of at the action like most modern firearms. They are available in both handgun and long gun models. The first black powder rifles, shotguns, and single shot pistols used flints to ignite the black powder. As time went by these firearms used percussion caps to ignite the powder. Even though these guns are primitive, they can still be used for

hunting and self defense in time of need. If you are interested in black powder muzzle loaders, you will need to learn more about black powder and how to handle it safely.

Air Rifles

Air rifles are useful for reduced cost associated with training. They can also be used for hunting, and target shooting. These rifles are the first type of firearms that most children and young adults learn to shoot with. As with any other gun, air rifles are not toys. They can be very dangerous weapons if miss used. Even smaller calibers can blind or cause other puncture wounds. Larger caliber rifles that are .357 caliber or larger using PCP high pressure air systems can kill small deer or deer sized animals. Air rifle ammunition comes in the following calibers: .177, .22, .25, and bullet sizes .357, .50, and larger.

Here are some air rifles types to consider for training and hunting needs:

- CO2 – These rifles are powered by CO2 that is stored in small removable cartridge in the rifle. The rifles are weather sensitive and are affected by temperature. At room temperature a typical cartridge will deliver a consistent 900 to 1000psi.
- Spring Piston – This is the most popular and most common first air gun that most people start with. They are break-barrel rifles that are easier to shoot and maintain than other types. You can also choose between models that are cocked by an under lever, side lever, or a top lever. Spring piston air rifles are also durable, however the springs wear out over time. Fortunately, the springs are easy to replace when needed. Just be sure to keep extras on hand in your stockpile so that you have them in a time of need.
- Gas Ram – The gas ram and the spring piston air rifles

are both cocked and shot the same way. Gas ram rifles have a piston that compresses air in a tube instead of cocking a spring piston. When the trigger is pulled, the piston is pushed forward and the air is forced into the firing chamber. This powers the pellet down the barrel. Gas rams have an advantage in the sense that once the air chamber is charged, it can last for years. Since there isn't a spring in the rifle, the shots fired from these types of rifles are very smooth and don't recoil.

- Pneumatic – These rifles are air powered with compressed air. There are three ways to charge these air rifles: Pump them up with a hand pump, Single stroke by pushing the barrel down to charge the rifles, or Pre-Charged Pneumatic (PCP). Air is compressed in a separate air tank and connected to the rifle with a special hose with a pressure gauge. The air tank fills the rifle's reservoir tank with the correct amount of compressed air.

Types of Air Rifle Ammunition

As with conventional guns, you also have some choice in the ammo you can fire from an air rifle. Here are some options to think about:

- Wadcutters pellets – have a broad flat head that is best suited to cutting precise holes in paper targets. As with wadcutters for conventional guns, they are mainly used for target practice or competitive shooting.
- Domed pellets – These pellets have a heavier weight at the front and a curved tip that make it easier for them to travel long distances. You will need to use a more powerful gun as compared to shooting pointed pellets if you want to hunt with domed pellets.
- Pointed pellets – Their shape makes it easier for them to travel further and cut through thicker hair and hides. They are suitable for hunting small game as long as the rifle has enough power to send the projectile at

a suitable speed.

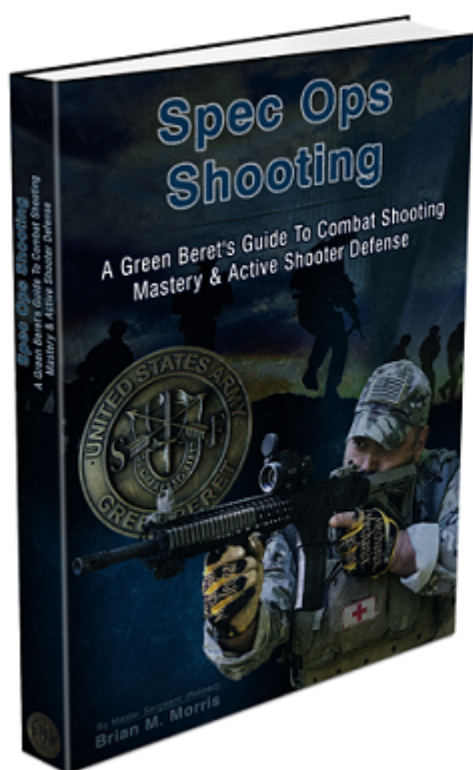
- Hollow point pellets are commonly used for hunting because they expand when hitting the game animal. They are designed to kill animals, however you will need a muzzle velocity of at least 1,000 FPS in order for the pellet to reach is optimal expansion.
- There are also a number of hybrid pellets available that combine the features of different types of pellets in order to arrive at something that will work for multiple purposes.
- Some PCP or heavier duty air rifles can also fire bullets that range in size from .357 to .50. Be sure to find out if it is legal to hunt with air guns in your state and the ammo limitations that are increasingly being imposed on these activities.

When it comes to arriving at an ideal number of weapons for your prepping needs, I could say that the minimum number is between 5 and 6 weapons per person 1 airgun for low budget training and hunting, 1 – 2 handguns for home and self-defense, 1 shotgun for home defense (pump action or semi-auto), and 1 – 2 rifles for perimeter defense and hunting). If more than one person is in your survival group, some guns can be used interchangeably as long as you have enough guns for each person to manage any given situation. For example, if there are two people, then each of you will need 1 or 2 handguns for self defense. While you may be able to share an air rifle, you will both probably need your own rifles and shotguns for hunting and perimeter defense.

Insofar as a maximum number, it all depends on how many people will be using the guns and how long you will need them for. If you are thinking about a situation where you will be hunting day in and day out for several years, then you may need more guns than for short term scenarios. Do not forget you must also account for ammo needs. You will find there is a delicate balance between diverse rounds and what constitutes a sensible

stockpile of ammo. While more diverse guns means a greater chance of obtaining rounds in a time of need, it also means your expense outlay will be more than is useful for the average prepper.

At the end of the day, more guns and more ammo won't make you safer or more able to handle a crisis simply because you have them on hand. You must be able to shoot these guns with accuracy and efficiency as well as take proper care of them. A smaller number of guns makes it easier to travel, and also gives you a better chance to master your weapons and use them to full advantage.



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