

Hollywood Myths About Using Guns That Easily Get You Killed

Movies and TV present seemingly magical scenarios where the good guy always wins and high impact action scenes are over in a matter of minutes.

While these forms of entertainment are designed to make you suspend judgment and go with the flow of the story, they do not accurately portray how guns work in real life.

If you tried to use a gun as they are used in the movies or on TV, it may well get you killed or, at best, seriously injured. There are no shortcuts to becoming a safe, well educated gun owner and user. If you gain nothing else from this article, at least know that movies, and TV (including reality TV and the news) are not good places to learn about guns.

Seek a qualified instructor and good quality courses. Now let's look at some of those misconceptions.

The “Gangster Grip” is as Useful as it is Cool

When criminals shoot in the movies or on TV, they tend to hold handguns so that the magazine port is angled about 90 degrees from the ground. Two things always amaze me about these scenes.

First, I can't imagine how they hit the target with the sights so far out of alignment, let alone put enough lead into the other shooter to kill him/her 10 times over. The other thing that amazes me is that the gun never has a fail to feed problem.

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Shooters that use the “gangster grip” claim that they hold the gun this way so they can shoot faster. The fact is they aren’t doing more than “spraying and praying” they hit what they think they are aiming at. In a lot of shootouts the target individuals are missed and simply escape.

Sadly, given the large number of bullets flying around, it is more than likely innocent bystanders will get hurt or killed.

The major problems with this way of shooting are:

- You can’t accurately measure movement left or right.
- You can’t get a reliable sight picture because you are aiming down the slide instead of via the sights.
- There is also no way to know if the pistol is pointing down below your field of vision from the back of the pistol.
- Even if you do hit your target, it is likely you will not make the same shot again because you are never actually aiming the same way twice.

Big Caliber Guns are Fine for Beginners

In movies and on TV, they often show a complete novice picking up a large caliber gun and firing it with no problems. This simply isn’t the way to developing good marksmanship and safe shooting works in the real world.

You will need to start off with small calibers and master them before moving on to larger ones. If you use a gun that has too much recoil, or is too powerful for you to control, you can easily hurt yourself and others.

Case in point. I have personally witnessed people using guns like the 50 Caliber Desert Eagle and winding up with severe head wounds when the gun escaped their hands and hit them after firing. Aside from that, never forget that you won't be just carrying a gun for a one or two hour TV show or movie.

You may carry the gun for years on end and never need to pull it let alone get through a problematic situation. During that time, you will still need to practice and make sure you do not develop problems such as jerking the trigger, flinching, looking away from the target when you shoot, or being totally afraid to handle or shoot pistols.

You Will Shoot Like a Pro from the Beginning

In movies, the good guy always shoots perfectly even if they have never fired a gun in their lives. No matter whether they got a "lucky shot" at just the right moment, or managed to be some kind of genius that engaged in a complex shootout, chances are you will not have the same experience during a time when your life depends on it.

Not only will you have to manage the gun itself, your own adrenaline and stress responses can, and will wreak havoc on you. It takes years of training and practice to become a master at shooting a pistol.

Getting Shot Looks Obvious

When a person gets shot in a movie, they are lifted up off the ground and thrown many feet behind them into glass window or some other spectacular background. In reality the victim may only move back a little bit and then fall over dead.

If the gun is of a smaller caliber, the person is likely to

remain standing. In most cases, the impact of the average bullet has about the same force as the recoil. This occurs mainly because the body has much more weight and mass than the bullet. In addition, remember, the bullet isn't made to just push the target, it is made to lodge in it or punch through it.

As such, you simply won't see a lot of movement backwards when the bullet hits a live target. Check with FBI's Handgun Wounding Factors and Effectiveness Manual for some further insights.

The Ammo Supply is Never Ending

Even though large capacity magazines may seem like they hold a lot of bullets, the fact is even 18 rounds can go very quickly. Some researchers have found that even [trained law enforcement officers](#) in a situation may fire their gun many times before hitting their target.

In a situation, it is likely you will run out of ammo and still not hit your attacker. While they never count their bullets in the movies, you must always know how many bullets you have left at every second. You should also remember to carry spare, loaded magazines and extra ammo.

Treating ammo like they do in the movies is a good way to wind up dead regardless of your experience and skill level.

You Will Always Be Thrown Backwards When You Fire a Gun

New shooters, or those with little shooting experience believe that they will be thrown backwards regardless of the caliber of the firearm. Smaller caliber guns have less felt recoil. Unless you are firing a weapon that is well beyond your capability, it is likely that only your hand and forearm will

move out of position.

With proper training and skill development, you should have no movement at all backwards from the recoil of a gun.

Semi-automatic Weapons Fire Like Machine Guns

In a lot of action movies semi-automatic weapons are portrayed as if they are full-automatics. There is a big difference between the two, which leads to the false claim that semi-automatic weapons are “assault weapons”.

A semi-automatic weapon shoots one bullet with one pull of the trigger even with or without it has a bump stock on it. Without this type of stock, AK, AR, and other semi-automatic weapons are no different than any other gun insofar as the trigger operation.

A full-automatic weapon, which can be called a “assault weapon” shoots many bullets without needing to pull the trigger again. This type of gun will only stop firing when the trigger is released. It takes a lot of training to shoot a full-automatic weapon accurately.

Without this training, all the shooter is doing is wasting ammunition and spraying the area vainly hoping to hit something. Both semi-automatic and full-automatic weapons must be aimed to get the best target accuracy.

Guns Will Always Fire When Dropped

In the movies, when actors or actresses drop a gun, it always goes off (and more than likely kills someone in the bargain). Today, guns are designed to not accidentally fire when dropped as required by The Gun Control Act of 1968.

Guns designed before The Gun Control Act of 1968 have no safe

guards to protect shooters from a dropped firearm going off. This one movie myth alone has probably negated dozens of modern alibis to murder made by people that claimed they dropped the gun and it fired “by accident”.

While it is still possible for this to happen, the drop safety test conducted by the manufacturer ensures that 99.999% of the time, a dropped gun will not go off. If the gun does fall out of your hands, never try to catch it while it is in motion. It is very easy for a finger or something else to get into the trigger guard and pull the trigger.

There is no Need to Aim a Shotgun

In many movies and on TV, people just point the shotgun in a general direction of the target and fire. To add insult to injury, once the shotgun pellets hits, everything and everyone is destroyed, dead, or dying. You can't just “point and shoot” a shotgun and expect to hit the target.

Good aim matters just as much when shooting a shotgun as it does shooting a pistol. With a shotgun, the further away the target is, the greater the shotgun pellets will spread. As such, it is easier than you might expect to completely miss the target.

Even if you shoot slugs out of the shotgun, you must aim at the target and compensate for the weight of the slug at different distances. The farther away from the target you are, the more the slug will drop.

It is Easy to Buy Firearms and Ammo

Movies and TV often show people walking into a gun store and simply buying whatever they want. Others show people walking in and flashing enough money to buy something “off the books”. Even worse, there are many other movies and TV that show

people buying a whole arsenal from gun shows or off the streets.

The false idea here is that all you have to do is go to your friendly neighborhood gun runner and get everything you need at cheap bargain basement prices. These movies never show the gun blowing up in the buyer's hands, or all of the problems that occur as a result of buying low quality junk that probably won't hit the target even if it does fire.

Sadly, these movies and the cultural opinion are also being used endlessly to drive gun control legislation.

It is true that private gun sales can be made in some states without the seller having to do a background check. Depending on the state, the seller may still have to make sure they are not selling to a convicted felon or someone else that is not supposed to have a gun.

Even in these states, it is already a crime to sell a gun to someone that shouldn't have it. As a result, if the buyer does get caught, the person that sold him/her the weapon will also face criminal charges.

Insofar as gun shows, there are some individuals that believe anyone can go to a gun show firearms retailers booth, lay down some money, walk out with a gun, and never file any state or federal forms. Buying a gun at a gun show retailer's table is no different from buying from any legitimate gun store.

All firearm retailers in the business of selling firearms must due the following:

1. Have a Federal Firearms License(FFL).
2. Perform background checks through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System(NICS).

3. If you pass the background check, then and only then can you pay for the firearm and then take it home.
4. If you don't pass the background check because you can't legally own a firearm, you will be arrested either right there at the show, or at home.
5. At all legitimate gun shows you will find local, state, and federal law enforcement officers there to monitor sales and be sure all sales are lawful transactions.
6. The so-called "gun show loophole" is a completely false construct. It is said that people can simply meet up outside the gun show and sell there; thus getting around straw purchase laws. This is no different from making a private sale in a remote location.

In fact, it is less likely these kinds of sales will be made on the ground surrounding a gun show because the police are actively looking for such sales and will act to put a stop to them. If anything, outside of a gun show is the worst place to make a private gun sale.

Never forget that gun shows, like most gun stores, utilize cameras and other forms of surveillance equipment. This includes on the grounds surrounding the gun show as well as inside the buildings.

In conclusion, if you believe everything you see at the movies or TV dealing with firearms you can wind up in some very bad situations. This includes being unable to defend yourself in a time of need as well as being largely uninformed about how gun laws work in the real world.

If you don't want to wind up dead or on the way to the pokey for breaking the law, it is best to relegate "action" TV and movies to entertainment purposes only and find a good instructor that will train you properly in gun use and ownership.



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*This article has been written by **Fred Tyrell** for Survivopedia.*