

WOMEN'S PERSONAL SAFETY

BE THE “WRONG” PERSON



Be the “Wrong” Person

- If you are paying attention, using good situational awareness, establishing personal boundaries and living in condition yellow, and if you have the right mindset in your everyday life, then you have a better chance of presenting yourself as the “wrong” person. Who is the wrong person? She’s the woman a stalker, attacker or criminal does not want to mess with because she is too alert and aware of her surroundings and because she appears to be prepared and ready. She’s YOU.
- Just like the **NRA’s Refuse To Be a Victim** program teaches, one of the most important steps toward ensuring your personal safety is making the conscious decision not to be a victim. You stand a much better chance of preventing a criminal attack if you develop a safety plan right now ... before you ever need it. So choose right this moment to be the wrong person.

Survivor Mindset

- Another important step is to recognize that YOU are responsible for your own safety. We can't always depend on others, like family members or even law enforcement officers, to watch out for us. As I mentioned, it's not about paranoia; it's about preparedness. It's about living your life with determination, purpose and resilience. If you can make that decision every day, then you are ahead of the game and are making yourself into someone bad guys won't want to target.

Establishing Personal Boundaries

- One of the most important things that anyone can do to ensure her safety is to establish personal boundaries and use situational awareness. This involves consciously, deliberately and actively making decisions and purposefully moving through daily events and activities.
- Of course, it's almost impossible to talk about personal boundaries and situational awareness without mentioning Colonel Jeff Cooper's Color Codes of Awareness. Col. Cooper, respectfully known as "the father of modern pistolcraft," took the military's codes and tweaked them so they could be easily adapted to regular folks' everyday lives. Here's what the color codes mean and how they can apply to your everyday life.



Condition White: Unaware

- Look around you. You may discover that most everyone is living life in condition white: unaware, distracted, preoccupied and oblivious. Think a minute about how dangerous this is. A person who is glued to his or her smartphone has no clue what's going on outside of that small area of focus. Someone meaning to do harm looks for this exact kind of person. Criminals don't want a challenge; they want easy prey. And what's easier than attacking a man, woman or child who is completely absorbed in a technological haze of games, emails, texts or social media?
- Condition white can be dangerous. It means that you are not paying attention to people, things or situations around you. If that's the case, you could miss a whole lot of cues or clues that bad things are about to happen. Condition white is really only good for when you are asleep. Even when you are "safe" in your own home, that's not an automatic, turn-off-the-brain situation. Condition white is a condition of heedlessness. It's the, "I never thought it could happen to me" mindset that we want to prevent. Don't be the heedless, preoccupied daydreamer, welcoming criminals to attack because you are always unaware.

Condition **Yellow**: Relaxed State of Awareness

- You should make the conscious decision and effort to always be in condition yellow, especially if you choose to carry a firearm. So what is condition yellow? Condition yellow simply means you are consciously aware of what's going on in your immediate area. This is not paranoia; it's preparedness. It means using common sense and paying attention. Think about moving around through life in your imaginary bubble. What's inside your bubble? Are there people in the bubble who are too close to you? Is there anything or anyone that seems out of place? If so, remedy those things!
- Condition yellow has been described as a "relaxed state of awareness." You're not darting your eyes around and cowering or crouching behind every corner. But you are taking notice of everything — and everyone — in your environment. You're not allowing anything to take you by surprise. You may be looking around, playing the "What if?" game, keeping your mind alert and considering the possibilities. You are also aware of possible exits and escape routes. Your demeanor, actions and behaviors communicate alert and assertive attention.

Condition **Orange**: Heightened Awareness

- Condition orange is an alert phase. Something is not right, and you've noticed it. You may have gotten a chill or a flutter in the pit of your stomach. Your heart may be beating faster. There may be a person or people nearby who have made you uncomfortable. Pay attention to that gut feeling. It's often right. This is no longer the "What if?" game; this is reality. You are focused on a situation and formulating a plan. You are trying to recognize and concentrate on the threat. Stay alert and be ready. You may start to think about accessing your firearm. You may have to shout a command, such as, "Stay back!" or "Don't move any closer."

Condition **Red**: Action

- This is a condition of action. If, after assessing a situation, you believe there is an actual threat, you will reach condition red. You may still not have to use your firearm, but your focus has moved from recognizing the threat to stopping it. This could involve anything from moving to cover, unholstering your gun or confronting an attacker. Hopefully, you have been able to think through and decide what course of action to take before now because this is not the time to think; this is the time to act. And your main goals are to keep yourself and anyone with you safe and **STOP THE THREAT**.

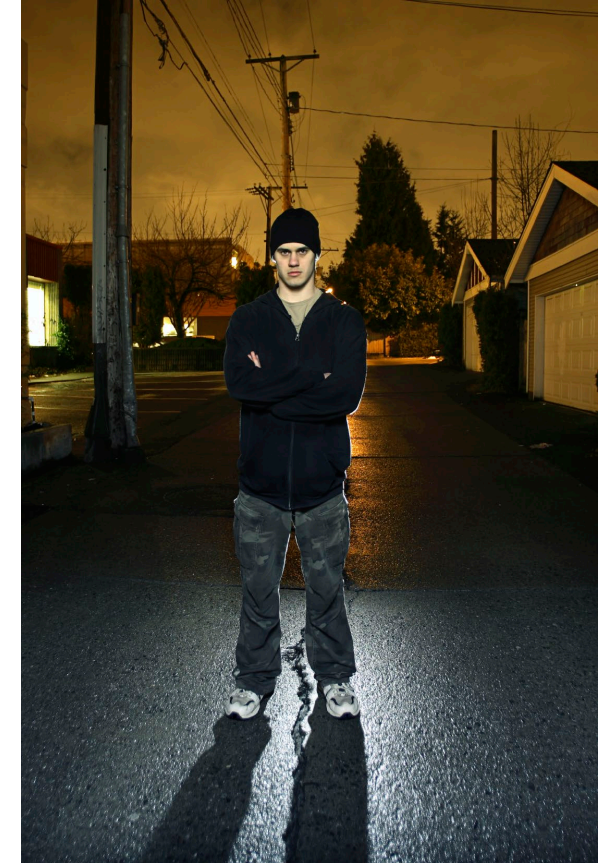
Avoid, Escape, Defend

- **Avoid:** No matter the circumstances, there's only one sure-fire way to guarantee you will walk away safely from a deadly encounter: Avoiding it in the first place. That sounds like common sense, but oftentimes we get so caught up with life and responsibilities that we forget to consider the basics. This would include using situational awareness and being aware of all your surroundings and steering clear of uncomfortable or unsafe environments or situations.
- Don't go somewhere alone if you're unfamiliar with the area or if you know it to be dangerous. Don't take the shortcuts that lead you down dark pathways or set you apart from the rest of the crowd. Don't approach strangers or let them get too close to you. Be aware. Make smart choices. Turn around and go back if you have to.



Avoid, Escape, Defend

- **Escape:** Seek out the nearest, easiest or best escape route, then make your quick exit. You are not responsible for what happens after you leave. You are responsible for yourself and, perhaps, whoever might be with you. Don't stick around to see if things escalate. Maybe they never will, but by that time, it could be too late, and you may have lost your chance.
- **Defend:** This could involve a series of steps, including yelling for someone to stop, warning someone to stay back, running to cover, drawing your firearm or even shooting to stop a threat.



Use of Force

- Before you do anything risky — especially as it pertains to concealed carry and personal protection — ask yourself: “Is this worth dying for? Is it worth killing for? Is it worth going to prison for?” This holds true tenfold when it comes to making the choices to defend your family or yourself with a gun. Unfortunately, television, movies, video games and even books have provided some very unrealistic and unsafe ideas about how, when and why to use guns for self-defense. It may surprise you to know how many factors come into play when deciding whether or not someone was justified in taking the life of another human being.
- In a nutshell, you, as a reasonable and innocent person, are justified in the use of deadly force when there is an immediate fear of otherwise unavoidable death or serious bodily injury. If you want to maintain your freedom and return home safely to your family, you should always do everything possible to avoid using deadly force. Since avoiding (or even escaping) a violent attack or encounter isn't always possible, you can at least program these aspects into your head now and hopefully be able to evaluate your actions before you do something you shouldn't.

The Four Rules Governing the Use of Force

In order to use deadly force, you **MUST** be able to reasonably justify that:

- 1) You were in immediate fear of death or serious bodily harm to yourself or another person.
- 2) You didn't initiate or escalate the incident. In other words, you were an innocent party.
- 3) No lesser force was sufficient or available to stop the threat.
- 4) You had no way to disengage or escape from the threat.

All of these factors must be present. This is what law enforcement officers, lawyers, juries and judges will be looking at closely. So plan to never, ever shoot anyone. But if you must shoot to stop a threat, do so wisely, and make sure you pay attention to and follow all the deadly force rules.

Voice Commands

We've been told for most of our lives not to raise our voices. Doing so can cause others to become uncomfortable or suddenly interested in what's going on. But both of these reactions could be useful in a defensive situation. In fact, your voice is actually one of the first tools you have to protect yourself. You can use your voice to:

- Startle an assailant
- Alert others nearby
- Increase your adrenaline
- Engage your core muscles
- Ensure you are breathing
- Help you remain emotionally present



Voice Commands

- The most effective voice commands to use for defense are direct and short. We also want to avoid using foul language or making threats (in case someone else hears you and decides to use your words against you).
- Unfortunately, some commands like “No!” or “Back off!” might not be enough to get your point across.
- While you can use whatever commands make the most sense to you, we prefer to teach our students to use: **“Stop! Drop your weapon!”** This is a very clear, bold statement that specifies what you want that person to do. It also gives others who may be nearby very important information: someone has a weapon and is intending to harm you.

Voice Commands

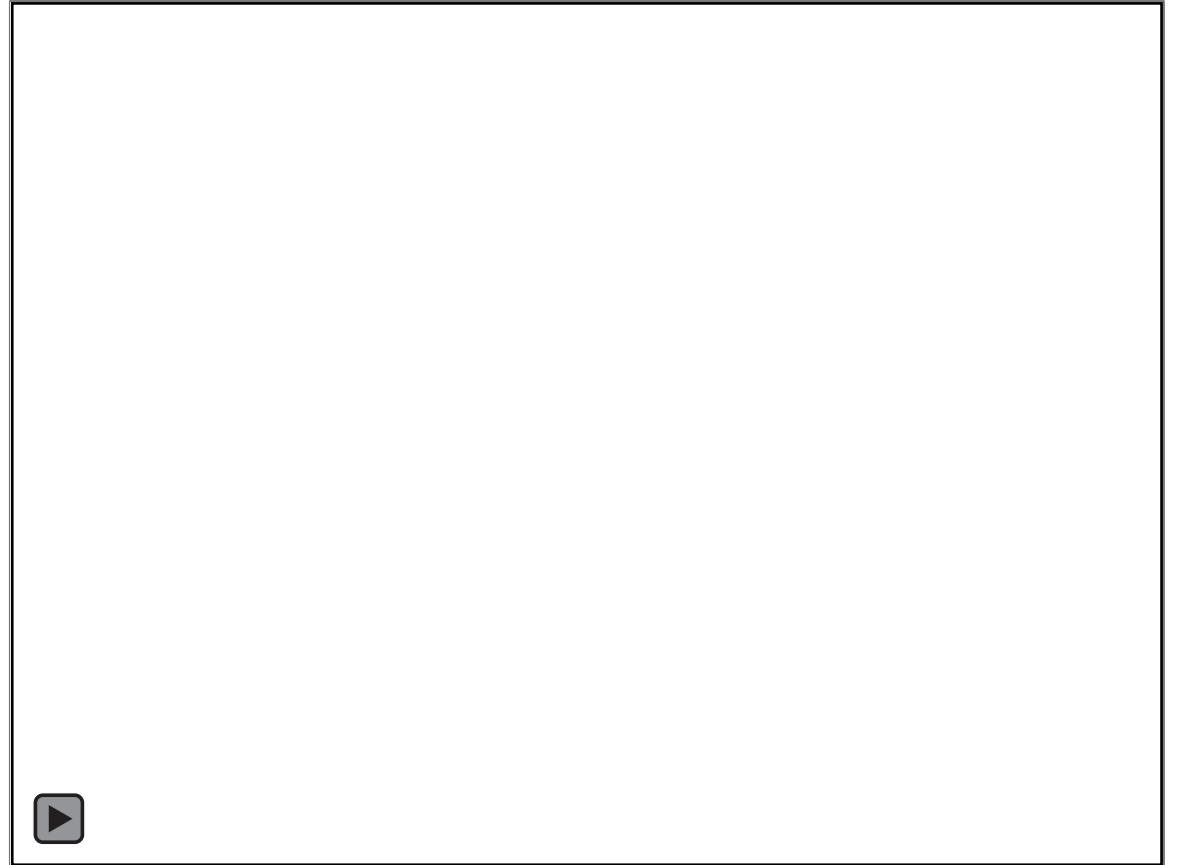
- All in all, assailants are looking for people they can overpower or intimidate, which they often determine by submissive body language. So it's not only important what you say but how you say it. You must be direct, make your demand and never apologize.
- Match your tone of voice and volume to suit the situation. Act tough and show no fear. Make direct eye contact, if possible. The inability to make eye contact is typically considered to be a submissive gesture. Yell loudly and firmly, with your body upright and agile. You're aiming for congruence, in which your words, your tone of voice and your body language are all sending the exact same message.
- Keep in mind that using voice commands may not always be the best option. In some situations, being quiet and unheard may be your chance to avoid, escape or defend. You may be able to use silence to remain unnoticed, which could give you the opportunity to get away from a bad situation or to draw and use your firearm to stop a threat.

Revolvers vs. Semi-Automatics

- When it comes to firearms, there are a lot of choices out there. Just walk into your local gun store. You'll probably see more firearms than you care to count! And because of all the different styles, shapes, colors, models, makes and price points, the selection process can be overwhelming.
- The myriad choices can often be quickly narrowed down to two basic types: the revolver or the semi-automatic pistol. Both styles of guns are used by millions of Americans for a wide variety of reasons. And both styles have caused disagreements, debates and arguments. In fact, the "revolver vs. pistol" topic is one of the most heated ongoing discussions among gun owners and firearms enthusiasts.
- There are definitely pros and cons to consider for both. But before we get into that, let's back up a bit and talk about the basics you should know about the two major handgun types.

Revolvers

- Samuel Colt was granted a U.S. patent for his "revolving gun" on February 25, 1836.
- In its basic form, a revolver is a handgun that uses a revolving cylinder that can hold multiple rounds of ammunition in separate chambers. Revolvers enable users to fire these rounds (typically five or six) without reloading.



Movie 2.2 Revolvers in Action

The awesome power of a .357 Magnum is demonstrated in this high-speed video, filmed at approximately 2,400 frames per second.

Semi-Automatics

In its basic form, a semi-automatic pistol is a handgun that uses the energy of a fired round of ammunition to cycle the action of the firearm and advance the next available round into a position for firing.



Movie 2.3 Semi-Automatics in Action.

In this high-speed video, you'll see the hammer go forward as the trigger is pressed. The slide moves to the rear before reversing direction and stripping a new round off the top of the magazine.

Pros and Cons

Revolvers



PROS

- Simple to load and unload
- Mechanically simple, resulting in a lower likelihood of malfunctions when compared with a semi-automatic
- Typically more reliable with many different types of ammunition
- Easier to clean and to maintain than semi-automatics

CONS

- Typically hold less ammunition than a semi-automatic of comparable size
- The bulky cylinder may make it harder to conceal than a thinner semi-automatic
- Revolvers often weigh more than a semi-automatic of comparable size
- Some may find revolvers to be more difficult to shoot than a semi-automatic because of a heavier trigger weight, a double-action trigger or because of the shape of the grip

Pros and Cons

Semi-Automatic		
	PROS	CONS
	▪ Larger magazine capacity (more ammunition) ▪ Faster to load and reload than revolvers ▪ More options (styles, shapes, sizes, calibers, hammer or striker fired, etc.) ▪ Flatter shape is easier to conceal than a revolver ▪ Less recoil	▪ Malfunctions are more common when compared to using a revolver ▪ Operator <i>must</i> learn how to clear these malfunctions! ▪ Field stripping for cleaning and maintenance is more complex and involves multiple parts that must be removed ▪ Based on size or hand strength, some people may find it difficult to rack a semi-automatic's slide, which will be required for initial loading and when clearing malfunctions

Choosing the Right Gun

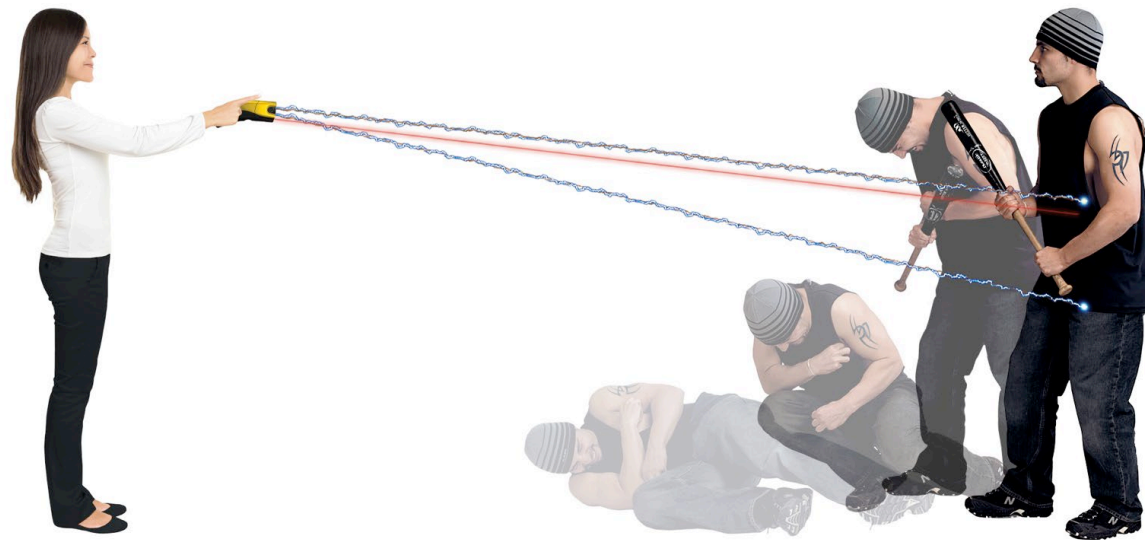
- Selecting a concealed carry handgun for personal protection is one of the most important decisions you can make, whether you're a college student, a businesswoman, a busy mother or anything in between. But since there's more to consider than just revolver or semi-automatic, the process can generate a host of interesting questions and challenges.
- Women often have specific needs and preferences to think about, and the differences between men and women really come into play when it comes to finalizing your handgun purchase.
- For example, your wardrobe preferences affect your choices.

Choosing the Right Gun

- Your hand and body shape as well as your physical size and strength matter.
- The makeup of your family, as well as your household, your career and your lifestyle make a difference. How and where you want to carry is also an important factor.
- All these attributes can influence or alter your ability to comfortably, effectively and proficiently use a defensive handgun. So, it's vital to think through and consider all the options.
- For anyone who's trying to find the right firearm, you need to look at three primary areas: shootability, reliability and efficiency.

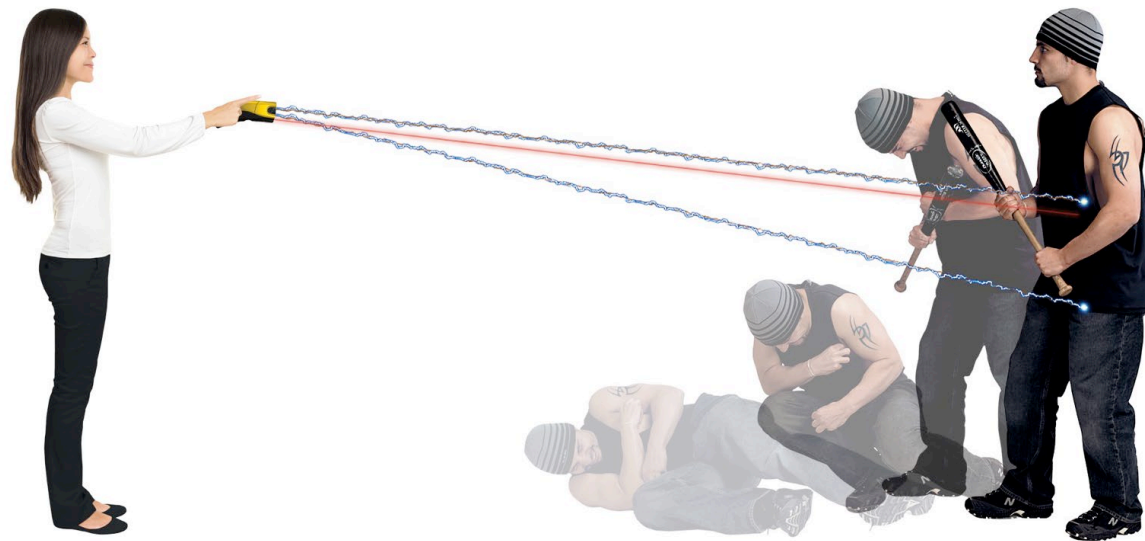
Other Use of Force Options

As part of our personal protection plans, we may want to consider other “use of force” options which have a lesser chance of killing an attacker and a lesser chance of putting us in legal peril, such as Tasers, pepper spray, knives, and impact weapons.



Other Use of Force Options

Remember: While a firearm can have a disabling or deterrent effect out to dozens of feet, these other devices will require you to be within 10–15 feet of the attacker for a Taser or pepper spray and within arm's reach for an edged or impact weapon.



How Tasers Work

- More properly called an electronic control device (Taser® is a brand name).
- Designed to send a high-voltage, low-amperage electrical charge through the body of an attacker.
- The charge confuses the body's own natural electrical signals, incapacitating the attacker.



Taser C2

How Tasers Work

- 1) When fired, compressed air is released to shoot two probes connected to wires in the direction of the attacker (up to 15 feet).
- 2) The probes embed themselves in the attacker's clothes or skin.
- 3) The device delivers a 30-second shock, allowing the victim to drop the Taser and retreat.

To avoid misuse, the C2 showers the ground with 20 to 30 “confetti like” tags, containing an identification number that can be traced by police.



Taser C2

How Pepper Spray Works

- The active ingredient in pepper spray is oleoresin capsicum (OC), a chemical found in cayenne peppers.
- OC affects mucous membranes like the eyes, nose, throat and lungs, and causes instant capillary dilation, causing the eyelids to shut.
- The bronchial tubes may swell, making it hard for the attacker to breathe.
- May incapacitate an attacker for as long as 45 minutes.



Kimber Pepperblaster

The PepperBlaster from Kimber, stores OC and benzyl alcohol in separate tubes, which are mixed when the trigger is depressed. The PepperBlaster delivers its spray at 90 miles an hour. The Pepperblaster has a CRC rating of 2.4%.



Questions?

Additional Resources



Visit: thehotline.org
Call: 800-799-SAFE(7233)
Text: "START" to 88788



Visit: nrdcv.org



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