



MEMBERS UPDATE

July 2019

Best Military Surplus Guns to Buy in 2019

Top 11 Alternative Concealed Weapons
Active Shooter Survival Concepts

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Alternative Concealed Carry Weapons

A concealed carry firearm is always our go-to option, of course. But what if local laws prevent you from carrying your handgun lawfully at work or in public places? What if you simply don't want to carry a gun every day? We've made a list of highly effective weapons you can carry without a license.



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Top Surplus Guns for 2019

While the term military-grade gets thrown around pretty casually these days, there's one class of equipment that it most certainly applies to: Military surplus firearms. The accuracy, reliability, and shooting enjoyment these very affordable guns provide proves that there's far more to collecting military surplus weapons than simply putting them in a display case.



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Surviving an Active Shooter

Sad as it may be, in the year 2019 school children across the US practice "lock down" drills on a regular basis, in much the same way they prepare for tornados and earthquakes. We adults, however, have almost zero training or preparation for how to deal with such a potentially catastrophic event. Fortune favors the prepared mind.



Concealed Carry Weapon Alternatives: How to Defend Yourself Without Needing a License

A gun is always going to be our choice for the best go-to concealed carry weapon, especially in a life or death situation. But what happens when you're unable to carry one or if you run out of bullets during a SHTF situation? Fortunately, there are many highly effective alternatives that don't require a license to carry -- at least not in most states, anyway.

These alternative options could save your life when you go to businesses, schools, and other areas that don't allow traditional CCWs on the premises. They're also a great option for anyone who has legal complications that prevent them from getting a CCW license.

Stun Guns



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A taser may be more exciting, but a stun gun has the benefit of being legal to own and carry without a license throughout most of the United States. These self-defense weapons aren't necessarily going to knock someone down or incapacitate them like a taser would. However, giving someone a good stun to the leg or arm should give you time to flee the area.

- Stun guns are legal in all but three states: Hawaii, New York, and Rhode Island.
- Four other states require some form of licensing: Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, and Mississippi.
- Additionally, three cities and one county have banned stun guns: Baltimore County, MD; Chicago, IL; Ocean City, MD; and Ruston, WA.

Since laws can change quickly, be sure to check your state, city, and county before you start carrying a stun gun.

DIY Guns (AKA Ghost Guns)



If you find yourself living in a seedy neighborhood, you may believe that you don't not have the time to go through the tedious process to purchase a gun. You may even find yourself kicking around the idea of a making a DIY gun in that case. The process of buying a firearm can take a while; however, so can learning how to build one yourself.

If you have the materials to build a homemade firearm, you might find that it is the easier of the two options. But, let's put a disclaimer here: if you don't have a lot of experience with guns, it's best not to assemble one on your own. On the other hand, if you have firm know-how about gunsmithing and are skilled in the use of common tools, you'll find it's easy to make a DIY gun that is safe and functions just as well as a store-bought one.

Crossbows



Azur Cosplay Photography/CC

3 If you are a Walking Dead or a Darryl Dixon (Norman Reedus) fan, you know that an expertly-

wielded crossbow can take down zombies, human enemies, and opossums with equal ease. However, that's Hollywood. In real life, you shouldn't be eating wild opossums, zombies don't really exist, and crossbows should only be used as a defense against another human as a last resort. As an aside, wild possum meat has been described as tasting like "something cooked in a burning plastic garbage can."

We do use the conceal and carry term lightly in regards to carrying them on your person. That's because most crossbows are heavy and take up a lot of room in your bag or on your body. There are some like the Avalanche Folding Take Down Survival Crossbow that are lighter than most and are foldable. Perfect for hunting, target practice and self-defense. As of this writing, it's also cheaper than most and on sale for \$20 off the retail price.

And, while a firearm is considered the go-to weapon of choice in defense and survival situations, a crossbow turns out to be an excellent weapon as an alternative in certain circumstances. Keep in mind that the laws for using crossbows differ, depending on which state you live. Ownership and seasons you can use them are mainly geared toward the hunting of game. Additionally, crossbows are legal to own in every state, except for Oregon.

Pepper Spray



If you want to be able to legally take someone down without killing them, then pepper spray should be a must-have on your alternative carry weapons list. This item is legal to use for self-defense purposes

in most states. Please note that using it during the commission of a crime is illegal everywhere.

Pepper spray provides nasty, disabling side effects such as temporary blindness, a burning sensation on the skin, upper body spasms, and difficulty breathing. These side effects last anywhere from 3 to 45 minutes, giving you ample time to escape.

- You must get a license or sign some type of registration to carry pepper spray in Massachusetts, New York, and Washington, D.C.
- Several states have restrictions on the amount and exact type of pepper spray you can carry, including California, Michigan, Texas, and Wisconsin. Always double-check any laws that are applicable to your area.

Don't confuse pepper spray with wasp spray. Although wasp spray may be helpful in an emergency situation, it's actually a federal crime to use most types of wasp spray in a manner that's inconsistent with the label's instructions – and that includes using it to defend yourself. Several tests have also determined that wasp spray isn't nearly incapacitating enough for it to have practical self-defense applications.

Self-Defense Keychain Tools



There are a wide variety of legal self-defense keychain tools, and some of them are even TSA-compliant. The type of tool you pick will make a big difference in how it's used and whether or not it looks like a self-defense tool to potential attackers. Here are a few options:

- **MUNIO Designer Self-Defense Kubotan Keychain** – Perfect for women who want a stylish, easy to use self-defense weapon. In order to get the most out of this tool, you'll need to have a good understanding of trigger points.
- **Langxun Folding Self-Defense Keychain Knife** – This sharp, 1.5-inch keychain knife looks like a normal key until you fold it fully open. This isn't going to do grievous damage to an attacker – unless you manage to stick it through their eye – but it will give you an element of surprise that should help you get away. NOTE: This item is not TSA-compliant.
- **VindiTech Guard Personal Alarm** – Sometimes, the best defense is to simply call attention to an attacker. This keychain attachable personal alarm will issue an ear-splitting sound that can be heard in a 1,000-foot radius. There's also a built-in LED flashlight that you can shine in an attacker's eyes.

Fast Strike Biker Whip



Amazon

Traditional biker whips are very long, thick, and have a heavy, metal end for striking objects. Due to this, they're considered an illegal weapon in some areas. The 17-inch biker whip from Fast Strike is thin, lightweight, and classified as a standard whip. In other words, it's legal but still packs a powerful punch.

This item can be carried inside your pocket, attached to a backpack strap, or even worn as a belt. According to the manufacturer, you shouldn't try to use it as a carry-on item while flying, though.

Nunchucks



Philip Post/Flickr

Nunchucks, or nunchaku as a pair of them is known, are an iconic martial arts weapon. Fashioned by two solid sticks connected by a chain or rope, they've been used extensively over the years during gang fights. Nunchucks are currently legal federally, but because of their potential for violence, they've been outlawed in three states: California, Massachusetts, and New York. Legalities often change, so be sure to research the laws in your state thoroughly.

Most of us have seen nunchucks used in movies such as *Enter the Dragon*. Jeet Kune Do master and iconic actor Bruce Lee starred in that movie, and he made the use of them look effortless and elegant when he dispatched multiple opponents in one scene.

However, in real life, utilizing nunchucks can cause bloody noses, fractures, and other injuries – and that's just to yourself if you don't know what you're doing. Do yourself a favor and don't be that person. Nunchucks don't look devastating at first inspection, but they can be.

It's best to start out with a training pair (they're lined with rubber cushion). It also doesn't hurt to watch a few YouTube training videos or take martial arts classes before going full-scale ninja and wielding a pair against someone trying to assault you.

Ninja Foot Spikes



Amazon

Speaking of Ninjas, someone attacking you will get a kick out of Ninja Foot Spikes if you are skilled at using them. And, by looking at photos of these bad boys online, it's hard not to imagine their effectiveness at surprising an attacker.

Interestingly enough, one Amazon reviewer, who maybe wasn't familiar with why metal lawn darts were outlawed, stated that he had bought a pair of them for his son. Although Ninja Foot Spikes look like something a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle would wear, you won't want to leave them within reach of -- or buy a pair for -- your kids.

Ninja Foot Spikes are banned in California, Massachusetts, and New York. If you live outside of those areas, simply order them, strap them to your feet, and use them as martial arts weapons if someone tries to assault you. As in the case of nunchucks, it's best to view a few YouTube training videos or take martial arts classes before busting out your Ninja moves.

Expandable Steel Baton

Most of us have seen police use an expandable steel baton on television or the movies when force is necessary to subdue a suspect. Some of us have even been unlucky enough to be on the receiving end of one. In the latter case, if you are one of those unlucky few, you know they hurt like a SOB.



Amazon

Because of their solid construct, they're plenty effective, making them one of the better ways to defend yourself if attacked. Hey, it works for the cops who often must rely on non-lethal weapons to take down a perp, so it's logical it will work for you, as well. Not so fast, though: steel batons are constructed of solid steel, and they can be quite lethal in a dustup if someone doesn't know what they're doing.

However, in the right hands, and with the proper training, a person can seriously clock an attacker by striking them with it. It also has the bonus of retracting into a small, compact piece that's easy to conceal.

Tactical Slingshot



Amazon

The slingshot of old has undergone scores of technological advancements to the point that it is on par or exceeds the ballistic characteristics of a firearm. In fact, today's tactical slingshot is considered military grade with a nearly endless supply of ammunition.

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Realize this: all tactical slingshots are not manufactured equally, so some of the more hardcore designed ones are not legal in every state. For instance, slingshots with a wrist-brace are illegal in the state of New York. This style of tactical slingshot is known as a "wrist-rocket," and owning one for any type of use is considered a misdemeanor in the Empire State.

Self-Defense App



Steph/ Pixabay

You may not realize it, but you're probably already carrying one of the most effective conceal and carry weapons around that doesn't require a license: your smartphone. Your smartphone, of course, can be used to call the cops. But did you know there are a variety of self-defense apps available for smartphones?

Take PANIK, for example. Download this app, and you can simultaneously activate a loud siren, flashing multi-colored lights, and a torchlight on your smartphone to draw attention if someone attacks you. The app also makes it possible to enter a PIN to prevent anyone besides you from shutting it off.

Lastly, PANIK can integrate SMS messaging and your social media into your alarm. The app will then send out a distress call on social media sites and text messaging to let your friends and family know you need help.

Going All Out

There are some of you out there who feel that just a little bit won't do. In fact, you feel you must go "all out." Words to describe self-defense weapons these people acquire and carry are somewhere along the line of "over-the-top," "overkill," and "are you crazy?"

If these words describe your weapons of choice, you'll know that they probably won't be on your person unless the SHTF. You can carry them and most of them can be concealed in your vehicle. Many of them don't require a license, either. You won't believe some of the weapons in this list you can legally own. That being said, we don't advocate the use of any of them for self-defense, but they are funny case studies to read about.

Flamethrower



US Army/Flickr

One obscure weapon out there that you can own without a permit is a flamethrower. Oddly enough, the website Trendchaser described the case of one gentleman who had crafted one of his own. The photo of him and his DIY flamethrower pack was impressive. Instead of the familiar one-nozzled flamethrower hose, his construct had two hoses that extended down his arms that ended in customized gloves.

Since we can't see any civilian use for a flamethrower, other than to burn brush or fry shapeshifting aliens like McReady did in John Carpenter's movie *The Thing*, we'd like to recommend that you take a hard pass on getting a flamethrower to use for self-defense. You mainly want to stop your enemies instead of burning them to a crisp, right?

Grenade Launcher

Nothing spells out deadly force more than using a grenade launcher the way it was intended. In other words, with a grenade. It's also hard to believe you can legally own a grenade launcher. But you can. All you have to do is register with the federal government.



Senior Airman Brett Clashman/USAF

But, wait. Do you really want the federal government knowing you own a grenade launcher? Especially since it is illegal for non-military to own “destructive devices,” and grenades are a subset of that category. The government might want to know what your grenade launcher is for. Potatoes, perhaps? Maybe, you don't care; we're just sayin' you might have some serious legal issues, or at the very least, explaining to do if you are insane enough to use one for real.

Here's a little information should you decide to proceed with your project. Grenade launchers fire a grenade faster and with greater precision than you can by throwing one. And, as with the flamethrower, there will be little left of your attacker if you fire a grenade at them and hit the mark. If you are hell-bent on buying one after reading this, one can be yours for about \$1,000 to \$3,000 on average. Just use it as a conversation piece once you get it, though.

All of these items, except for those in the Going All Out section, can help you get away from an attacker without applying lethal force or needing a carry permit in most states. This makes them a great addition to anyone's self-defense gear!

And while some of these solutions are more concealed and/or more carry-friendly than others, there are certain to be a couple that will work for your needs. We enjoyed learning about some of these non-lethal defense tools and definitely tend to lean toward conventional options such as pepper spray, stun guns (i.e. close range tasers), and collapsible batons. If law enforcement officers and security professionals rely on these tools, it's safe to say their defense value has been tested.



BEST MILSURPS TO BUY IN 2019

It's true, the term "military-grade" gets thrown around a lot these days. It doesn't bring the level of credibility or excitement that it once did and, in our opinion, still should. Advertisers have used this non-scientific term to sell everything from cheap sunglasses to the Ford F-150's "military grade aluminum" body panels. Honestly, who really cares if a pair of socks is "military-grade" or not?

Perhaps the term we should be focusing on as consumers is the term "mil-spec," since it at least refers to items that meet some type of Department of Defense standards. Regardless, the fact is that items designed for military use are, as a rule, much more rugged, dependable, and reliable than those designed for your average Joe 6-pack. Notice, we didn't say more comfortable or user-friendly.

Military-grade or mil-spec gear has been designed, tested, and approved by the Department of Defense (or a foreign counterpart) in order to serve in a theater of war, where properly functioning gear is a life or death concern. Often, these items do eventually impact the consumer marketplace.

Think of the recent XM17 handgun contract that spawned the development and/or improvement of the Beretta APX, M&P 2.0, HK VP, and SIG P320 platforms. You may not be able to purchase the actual

XM17 handgun, but you can pick up the civilian equivalent (Sig Sauer P320).

Perhaps one day long from now, we'll be able to pick up a true mil-spec XM17 as a military surplus liquidation. Which brings us to the topic at hand.

WHY MILITARY SURPLUS GUNS



While the question seems self-explanatory, it turns out that the answer is a bit more complicated than it appears. As a firearms enthusiast, particularly one who may prefer purchasing the latest and greatest firearms on the market, chances are that you subscribe to one or two explanations for why people buy military surplus firearms instead of a brand-new Glock or M&P.

The first explanation is pretty simple: military surplus guns are cheap. It is true that some surplus guns are fairly inexpensive. However, there are plenty of “cheap” firearms on the retail market; cheap in price and cheaply made. The fact is, whether they’re military surplus or brand-new, price is not always a good indicator of reliability.

The second explanation you might subscribe to is that people who like military surplus firearms are by and large collectors, not shooters. This is also only half true.

Surplus guns often increase in value over time, some more than others. Part of this is due to the fact that their value has already bottomed out, i.e. they’ve been decommissioned and sold en masse. That said, if it’s truly “military surplus” guns we’re talking about, not collectible historical firearms, these guns are not rare, nor are they particularly valuable. By our definition, the true value in “milsurp” guns is determined by these two criteria:

1. Is the surplus gun price competitive with a consumer grade weapon you’re considering buying for the same use (a deer rifle, for example)?
2. Does the military surplus gun compete with, or outcompete, the consumer version?

In many cases, the answers are yes on both counts. Because, as we stated before, these guns are generally inexpensive. Plus, military firearms (rifles in particular) have better performance than any lower to mid-level consumer weapons in terms of both accuracy and reliability.

That’s not to say there aren’t great rifles on the market at entry level price points, but they’re typically not going to perform as well as a military surplus rifle you pick up for the same price or often much less. The reason for this isn’t magic; it’s often just common sense and simple physics. Military surplus rifles have longer barrels, sturdier actions, and designs that were tested extensively in theaters of war.

Simply put, the outcome of many key military battles was decided by which army had superior equipment.

9 It doesn’t matter how great of a shot you are if

your weapon is constantly jamming or your rifle’s accuracy is a joke.

While this was sometimes the case, we’ve taken the time to pick through the current military surplus market and come up with some safe, high value guns. These are the guns that are both still widely available in the US market, and represent a superior value for shooters. In our book, a good military surplus weapon should significantly outperform a consumer version in the same price range. If not, it doesn’t make the cut.

ROMANIAN TTC



The TT Pistol and many of its variants have been around a long, long time. According to m1-Garand-Rifle.com, many police officers in poorer Asian nations like Pakistan and North Korea still carry this semiauto pistol as their service weapon. You might even go as far as to call it Russia’s version of the M1911.

Now, “is it as cool as the Colt?” you might ask. Hell no; nothing is as cool as the M1911.

Still, for around \$200, the Romanian surplus TTCs on the market these days pretty much beat the pants off a Hi-Point or any other semiautomatic pistol that you can find in that price range. And while there are some decent pistols out there at some very inexpensive price points, the truth of the matter is they are not “military-grade,” nor have they been as thoroughly field tested as the TTC. They’re not even in the same ballpark.

High quality isn’t a feature associated with most Soviet goods, but their firearms are a different story. One reason for this is, like so many Soviet designs,

ahem... the TT's blowback design was very clearly "inspired" by some proven western innovation. In this case, it was John Browning's FN Model 1903 that draws the most comparisons with the TT. You might call it an unpaid homage (AKA a direct rip off).

Nevertheless, Fedor Tokarev's 1930 design has withstood the test of time and was extremely influential within the Communist world. Now that it's emerged on the surplus market, it's finally making an impression on Western shooters as well. By and large, the consensus is that the TT and several other budget-friendly firearms on this list are probably the USSR's greatest (and only) lasting contribution to the world.

Joking aside, the weapon was in service for various militaries around the world from 1930 until the present day (in Bangladesh and North Korea). So, it's safe to say that after all these years they've worked the kinks out. In recent years, the Romanian-built TTC has been available in mass quantities in the US, which has kept the price tag under \$250, and sometimes even under the \$200 mark. For a weapon this well made, reliable, and high-quality, that's a real bargain.

What most shooters notice about this weapon, aside from the similarities with Browning-designed pistols, is how nice the ergonomics are. Even more unexpected is the nice trigger feel with a good weight and a crisp break. The hammer has a half-cock which locks up the trigger and slide, but imported models were retrofit with either a thumb or rear safety.



Another fairly surprising feature with this weapon is the light recoil. It recoils just a tad harder than a .22lr, opting for faster velocity over a heavier bullet. The end result is a hot round featuring a fat cartridge necked down to a 7.62mm bullet.

The 7.62X25mm Tokarev ammo may not be available at Cabela's, but neither is it hard to find. The 8-round magazine, takedown, and operation of this pistol

will likely feel much more familiar to you than you'd expect out of a Russian gun. The Browning roots are likely responsible for this.

TURKISH MAUSER MODEL 1938



The Gewehr 98 or M98, has clearly carved out a spot in the military firearms hall of fame; partly based on its reputation for accuracy and reliability, partly because of this weapon's role in World War history. This German-designed rifle saw action in the Chinese Boxer Rebellion in 1900, The Spanish Civil War, and, of course, extensive use as Germany's primary infantry rifle during WWI, obviously.

Its reputation for accuracy, dependability, and ease of use propelled it to become one of the most successful rifle designs for much of the 20th Century, licensed and reproduced for military use in Chile, Argentina, Belgium, Germany, China, Spain, Yugoslavia, and, of course, the Ottoman Empire (AKA Turkey).

While the collector value is much higher in the German and European models, one of the best values for shooters in 2019 is actually the Turkish Model 1938 (M38). Part of the secret recipe here is that these Turkish models are German mil-spec, completely interchangeable with their German counterparts.



In fact, many of the Turkish Mausers were made on equipment shipped from Germany and manufactured under license before the fall of the Third Reich. Thus, from a shooter's perspective, the Turkish Model 38 is essentially a Gewehr 98,

only much cheaper and less coveted by collectors. However, this isn't the best kept secret in the world and the prices for this model have been steadily climbing.

The sturdy bolt-action, 5-round stripper clip, and flip-up sights are actually just as functional as they are iconic. At around \$350-400, you'd be hard pressed to find a better shooting rifle. However, as we mentioned, the price on these Turkish M38s is heating up.

One nice thing about the Mauser is ammo is easily available. The 8mm rounds, 7.92X57mm to be exact, are still widely used by militaries, and thus it is possible to find military surplus ammo for this rifle every now and again. This rifle has been adapted for hunting and sporting use for over 100 years, thanks to its reliability and user-friendly design. If you're in the market for a rock-solid rifle with some serious street cred, keep an eye out for the Turkish Mauser Model 1938.

STAR MODEL BM 9MM



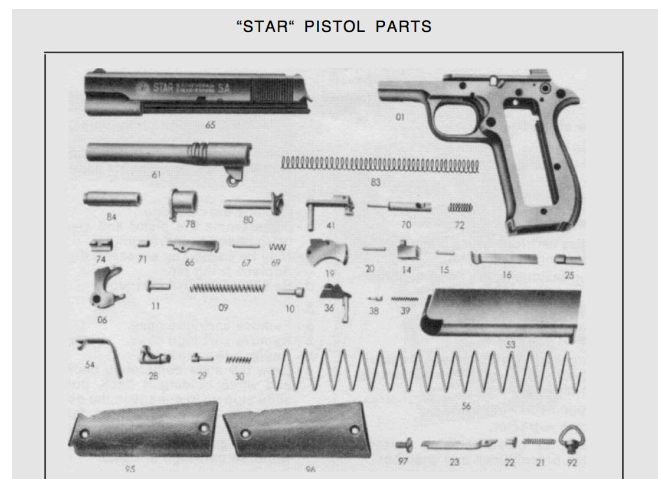
The Star Model BM is a big deal in 2019 for a couple of compelling reasons. First off, there's the limited time component. We are currently experiencing a true military surplus scenario, as these Spanish made semiautomatics have been imported to the US market en masse.

As you can imagine, that's pushed the supply sky high and the prices near rock bottom. As of this writing, you can order one of these 9mm pistols from JGSales.com for only \$179. You can upgrade to a "good-very good" condition for another \$40 and you can also add on extra magazines, which is awesome. That said, time is of the essence.

Now that we've got that out of the way, it's time to focus on the good stuff. The Model BM itself; and, contrary to what these letters often stand for in the English language (Bowel Movement), this weapon is anything but a P.O.S. In fact, the BM has gained an excellent reputation in the milsurp market because it's rugged, dependable, and it more than just resembles the ever-popular M1911.

From a simple glance at the Model BM, it's plain to see that it was heavily influenced by the 1911. We're going to call that resemblance to one of the best-looking handguns in history good news. The even better news is that the genius of Star's tribute is more than skin deep.

M1911 fans will find many things familiar about this pistol, from the grips to the solid feel to even the takedown. Aside from a few small differences, field-stripping this BM is extremely similar to field-stripping the M1911.



There are some key differences, however. For starters, the Model BM fires the 9mm cartridge. If you like lighter recoil, which the heavy steel frame eats up quite well, then this is an upgrade for you. The grip profile is also a bit different from the 1911s, as it doesn't have a grip safety. The BM does have a magazine disconnect, though, so if you pull the hammer back during cleaning, you're going to need to reinsert the mag to de-cock it.

As for accuracy, the majority of these weapons have significant barrel life left. And although they look like an older WWII-era weapon, the fact is that they were produced from 1972-1992. Thus, they're not nearly as old as they appear, which means the more

advanced manufacturing techniques did wonders for quality control. Your mileage may vary.

At 35 ounces overall, the Model BM isn't the ideal carry weight, but with its 8+1 capacity and excellent reliability, plus the fact that it captures some of the 1911 glory, some do use this as a carry weapon. That's a lot of functionality for a sub \$200 surplus weapon. OK, we'll come out and call it the poor man's 1911. But at such a price, this thing is a steal and will almost certainly double or triple in price over time. That's not us encouraging you to invest or speculate, only to get one while they're still a hot deal.

MOSIN NAGANT M91 30



Here's a truly iconic WWII-era rifle that has been rapidly increasing in value, yet it's still plenty affordable in 2019. The Russian-made 3-Line M1891/30 rifle, one of the variants that are all generally referred to a "Mosin-Nagant" on the surplus market, were the standard issue rifle for Russian troops from the late 19th Century all the way through WWII.

Over 37-million Mosin-Nagants were produced, and many are still used in conflicts all over the world today. That explains why these have been so readily available for so long in the US surplus market. But there's more to the popularity of these rifles than just the fact that they're plentiful and relatively inexpensive.

The quick backstory on this rifle is that it's a mashup between two designs submitted to the Russian military in 1889. The first was designed by a Russian captain by the name of Sergei Ivanovich Mosin. The other put forth by Belgian designer Léon Nagant. In 1891, the testing was concluded and the M1891 "3 Line" (AKA 7.62mm) was the result. In 1930, several improvements were made to the design, thus we got the M91/30.

Now, many shooters in the past had gotten the impression that these weapons were low-quality, simply because you could pick one up at the gun shop for \$80. The fact is, over 17 million of the

M91/30 variant alone were produced, and, being a very durable rifle, a high percentage of them are still in good working condition today. This is a situation where supply truly did outpace demand for decades.



Mosin-Nagant is an excellent bolt-action rifle that's accurate and fun to shoot. With a 5 round internal magazine, it's not the fastest gun in the West to reload, but it's an excellent gun to plink around or hunt with. With a powerful cartridge (the Russian 7.62X54mmR) that is still intermittently available in the military surplus market, ammo availability for the Mosin-Nagant is not a problem. Several manufacturers produce this ammo new, as well, priced around \$1 per round.

Like most others on this list, the M1891/30 is a weapon that we expect to continue to increase in value fairly rapidly, yet as of now it can still be had for a good bargain. The seemingly inexhaustible supply of Mosin-Nagants is finally starting to dwindle, bringing the price up to around \$250-300.

NORINCO SKS



In our last spot, we've got yet another communist gun. And again, it saw more or less worldwide adoption in the military and police arenas from the first time the SKS was used in battle (WWII) all the way through the present. While fighting the Germans in World War II, the Russians became impressed with the accuracy and rapid-fire capability of the German Sturmgewehr 44.

To match the Germans strength on strength, the Russian military developed an extremely similar round to that of their enemy, the 7.62X39mm (the same round later used by the legendary AK-47). The SKS saw a small amount of field use by the Russians at the tail end of WWII, but saw much more action by the USSR's allies like China, which used this rifle extensively in "The People's War." Over 60 different countries have issued the SKS in military service and 5 different arsenals have produced it.

In fact, the SKS is still in military service in Vietnam, North Korea, Cambodia, and Laos. Now, that's equally a testament to how well the SKS has stood up to the test of time, as it is for how poorly equipped those militaries are. Still, we point this out to show how extensively this pattern was used and why there are just so darned many of them hanging around.

Chinese manufacturer Norinco produced a ton of SKS rifles they dubbed the "Type 56" for military use, continuously refining production and even producing many models for the consumer market. These were hugely popular in the US and became known as "the poor man's deer rifle" until they were banned in 1993. Back then they could be purchased for \$65!



13 Unlike other models, the SKS really stands out to us as a shooter's gun, rather than a collector piece. Fact is, they're great to shoot. The 7.62X39mm round isn't as inexpensive as it once was (5 cent a round),

but it's a versatile caliber with a relatively mild recoil. The 10-round magazine can be fed via a stripper clip, or loaded by hand via the trapdoor at the bottom.

As we mentioned, Norinco produced many of these guns for the consumer market, which means there are several variants to be aware of even among the Chinese models. The top of the line models boast features like milled receivers and screw-in barrels. The lower-end models have cast receivers and pinned in barrels. These aren't preferred, but the guns seem to work just fine.

THE 2019 SURPLUS OVERVIEW

Like we said in the introduction, the term "military grade" should mean more than it does in the world of advertising. It should mean that a product has been designed, approved, and field-tested for actual military use, like the weapons on our Best Military Surplus Guns for 2019 list.

These guns, despite their market value, are tried and true war weapons that are frankly "overbuilt" by consumer standards. Yet, they're still plentiful enough to keep prices well below what they would cost if manufactured for the firearms market of today.

We've seen several videos in which experts conduct side by side tests, "milsurps" vs. high-end rifles, evaluating accuracy, quality, and even features. The majority of these conclude that these military surplus rifles would retail well over \$1,000 if they were produced today by a manufacturer like Ruger or Savage. Yet, you can still pick one up for \$250 or less if you shop around.

The main thing to remember is that they're not making any more of them. Perhaps one day, weapons from the US arsenal used in Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom, Afghanistan, etc. will come into the surplus market. We tend to doubt it, though.

Barring another massive global conflict, knock on wood, there may not be another glut of surplus weapons available in the near term. That said, if you want a military grade firearm for less than you can get a low-quality consumer grade firearm, now is the time... they're not making any more of them.





HOW TO **SURVIVE** AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SCENARIO

It is a rare thing that you'll hopefully be lucky enough to avoid in your lifetime, but the truth is, active shooter scenarios are extremely random and you can find yourself in a mass shooting just for being at the wrong place at the wrong time. Unlike other catastrophes, mass shootings are unpredictable; it's not limited to a certain race, sex, country, city, or religion. And unless the FBI gets a tip in time, you will not get a warning. So, why is society not more prepared?

You might be thinking your chances of being in an active shooter situation are as likely as you getting hit by lightning. Let me just say, since I began writing this, another active shooter situation occurred on the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Now, I agree with the experts, it is technically rare. However, it seems like the trend is increasing. On top of that, there are much more random occurrences that we as a society have been taught to survive like an earthquake, tornado, nuclear attack, etc. So, you might as well add this active shooter survival guide to your repertoire.

15 It's something you hope you or your family never experience. But if you do, you'll be as prepared as you

can be with the help of this guide that's based on the expert advice of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, FBI, police, and Jeff Brown (a Lieutenant Colonel during the Korean War and former Executive Council Member of the NRA). It will show you ways to train yourself using your environment and how to notice cues before a mass shooting occurs. And, of course, it will explain exactly what to do when you are in the middle of an active shooter situation.

PREPARATION

Before we go into what to do when you're in an active shooter scenario, let's focus on what you can do before anything happens. The reason being, the more prepared you are, the better chance you'll have to survive this type of situation. Everything we go over in this section are things you and your family can practice daily, after which, it'll become second nature.

LOOK FOR EXITS IN ADVANCE

One way to increase your chances of surviving an active shooter situation is by making it a habit to look

for the exits of any establishment you visit. If you know where the exits are before an attack occurs, you will have a better chance of escaping, which should be the first thing you do.



According to Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Standard 29 CFR 1910.38, every establishment with more than 10 employees is required by law to have an emergency action plan displayed. Make it a point to check the sign out as well as visually establish where the exits are. Once you see where the exit(s) are, you can imagine where you will escape if a shooter enters the room.

Don't limit this way of thinking to only when you and your family go out. It's a good idea to also teach your children to do this when they are at school, seeing that many shootings have occurred in school settings. No matter where you are, make sure to take a look around and establish where the exits are because you never know where a shooter will attack.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Situational awareness is one of the most powerful tools at your disposal that will give you an edge in an active shooter situation and will increase your survival percentage.

According to the Army Field Manual, situational awareness is the "knowledge and understanding of the current situation which promotes timely, relevant, and accurate assessment of friendly, competitive, and other operations within the battle space in order to facilitate decision making. An informational perspective and skill that fosters an ability to determine quickly the context and relevance of events that are unfolding."

Essentially, situation awareness is first being able to notice cues and information from your environment,

16 then gathering that information to understand what is

happening, and finally using it to predict what might happen in the future.

However, this doesn't mean that you should be on high alert 24/7. The degree of alertness will depend on the type of situation you are in. To help you understand further, let's turn to the late Jeff Brown, who developed a "Color Code" system that breaks down situational awareness into four conditions of increasing alertness.

Condition White: In this situation, you are relaxed and comfortable; specifically, when you are at home or in a place you are sure is safe. If you happened to be attacked in condition white, it is very likely you will not survive because you will not be on high alert. So, make sure you are confident it is a safe environment.

Condition Yellow: Here you are still relaxed but are aware of what and who is around you. You will notice objects and sounds while you're out and about in society or even at your home. This does not mean that you will be paranoid about every person and every noise. In this situation, your attention level is slightly heightened so that you won't be totally caught off guard if someone attacks.

At this stage, you are not anticipating a threat. Instead, you are taking a somewhat inventory of who and what is around you. You're also running a "what if" scenario through your head, like where the attacker would enter and what your reaction would be.

Say you're walking in a public place. You'll want to keep an eye out on anyone walking behind you. If you're at a restaurant, try sitting at table that faces the entrance or that isn't positioned behind a large number of people.

If you happened to be attacked at this stage, you won't be that surprised and will already have a pre-planned escape route running through your head, which will increase your chances of surviving.

Condition Orange: In this condition, something or someone has caught your attention, but you are not sure if it's a threat or not. You will focus all of your attention on this possible threat until you gather more information and see if it is actually a threat you need to respond to.

When you notice someone or something out of place, your general awareness goes from a 360-degree view to a very focused concentration on the possible threat. Just make sure to continue to be aware of other things around in case the threat in front of you is distracting you from a bigger threat behind you.

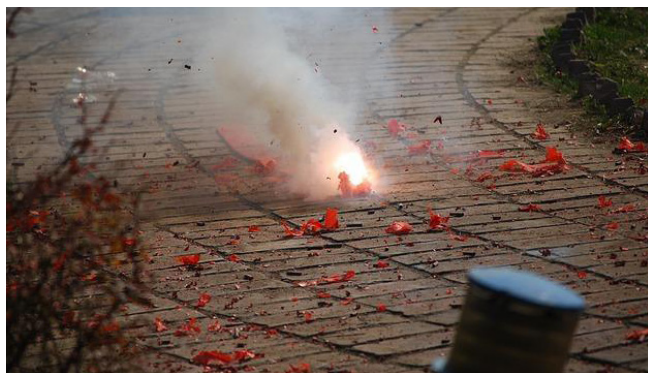
If you are attacked, you will be prepared since you have the threat in your eye line. You also already have a pre-planned escape or attack route.



Condition Red: If the same threat you found suspicious in condition orange does something threatening, then you immediately move to condition red. The possible threat has now been deemed an active threat and you need to react.

At this level, you are fully prepared to handle the threat at hand if you are attacked. You've established the active threat, you have done a "what if" run-through in your head so you'll have a faint idea of what might happen next, and you've already thought of exit routes.

LISTEN TO YOUR GUT



If something seems out of place and not part of the show, listen to your gut and get the hell out of there. If you look over witness accounts of past mass shootings, you can see clear examples of how listening to your gut can give you those extra seconds you might need to save your life and the lives of those around you... and how not listening to it can result in death.

In the 2012 Aurora movie theater shooting, Derek Spruel, whose friend and fellow airman Jessie Childress was killed in the shooting, said this of the attack: "To be honest, my first idea was fireworks. I thought it was a prank at first. I feel real bad to say this, but I really tried to continue to watch the movie."

It makes sense why many of the moviegoers believed it was a prank or part of the show; they had the idea that a mass shooting could never happen in their quiet town, so the thought never popped into their head. Many people still believe this, but as stated in the beginning of this piece, mass shootings are completely random. Just accepting that a mass shooting could possibly occur will give your gut more to go on.

There were some who did listen to their gut, like moviegoer Anggiat Mora. He recalled feeling something was off when he saw the tear-gas canister fly across the theater. Despite hearing other moviegoers cheer and clap for what they thought was a stunt, Anggiat's first instinct was to order his family to the floor and instruct them to move when the shooting stopped. His son went first, followed by his wife, and then himself. They were at the exit when he turned and saw his wife was on the floor with gunshot wounds to her left arm and left leg. He was able to carry her out on his back to safety and soon realized that his son had been shot in the back as well. Although his wife and son got shot, his instinct ended up saving not only their lives but his as well.

Another set of examples to look at are the recorded reactions of some concert-goers in the 2017 Las Vegas shooting. Unlike other mass shootings, many people had been recording the band playing when the shooting started. In one video, once the shooting starts, the band on stage quickly stops and bolts off

stage to take cover while the concert goes question what they are hearing.



There are many videos where you can hear the bursts of shots and people bunched together, ducking on the ground. But what is interesting is that there's a big discussion amongst people of whether or not what they were hearing was fireworks or gunfire. In one video, a woman is adamant it is gunfire and is pleading with her friends to find cover and stay put, while a man can be heard saying that he is 100% sure it is not gunfire because he's been around guns his whole life.

In a chaotic scene like this one, it is best to put your ego away and go with what your gut is saying. If your gut gives you a tiny hint that something is not right, take its word and question your reaction later once you are safe. An extra second could be the deciding factor of whether or not you survive, so don't risk it. React first and question later.

UNDERSTAND THE MIND OF AN ACTIVE SHOOTER

According to the American Psychology Association, most mass shooters "tend to share three common traits: rampant depression, social isolation, and pathological narcissism."

The narcissism trait is said to be one of the primary reasons these mass shooters choose public places with a lot of people. They are looking for fame and know from history that the more victims they kill, the more media coverage they will get once the act is complete. They've even started using social media platforms to record their evil acts live for more people to see and remember them by. Now, the reason this

is being discussed is because it can give you a little insight into what type of venue these mass shooters are more likely to attack.



These shooters are looking to make a name for themselves, and they do this by picking a venue that is filled with a lot of people, like a movie premier, church gathering on a special holiday, concert, etc. They are looking for a place that will get the most media attention, so it's important to be weary when you visit a high-profile venue. You don't have to avoid going to these venues; you shouldn't be held captive by the idea of an active shooter scenario occurring. But if you do go to place with a lot of people, just make sure to be more alert than usual.

Another thing to point out is that these shooters seem to target gun-free zones that provide them with the least resistance, so keep your eyes peeled when you are in one of these zones.

DON'T BE THE CENTER OF ATTENTION

If you're in a movie theater, sit closer to the exits instead of in the middle rows where the eyes immediately focus on. Also, try not to wear anything bright or elaborate that will bring unwanted attention.

ENROLL IN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER PREP CLASS

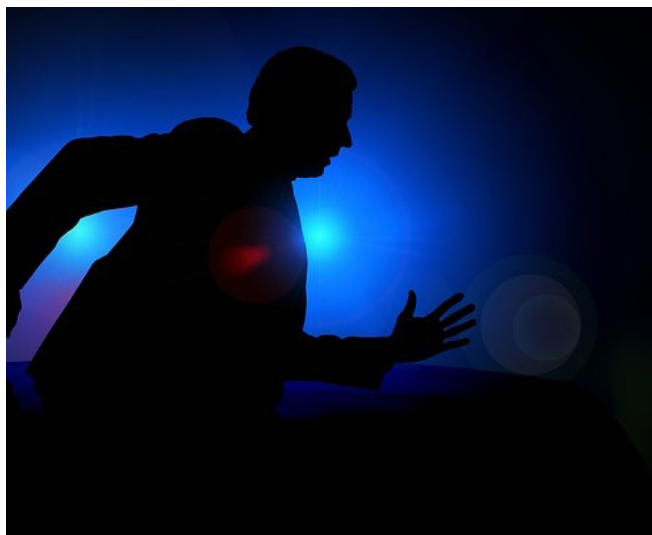
There are many active shooter training courses you can enroll in to get hands-on experience of what it might feel like to be in such a situation and what you should do. By being exposed to the possible noise, actions of others, and adrenaline rush, you will be able to handle yourself better if it happens in real life.

SURVIVING AN ACTIVE SHOOTER: EBA

The Department of Homeland Security and FBI, among other security departments, have agreed that

the best plan to abide in an active shooter situation is escaping, hiding, and then attacking. Let's look at exactly what each entail:

ESCAPE



Your first line of defense is to escape, no ifs or buts. This is why it's important to always get a feel for every environment you walk into and identify where the exits are located. Your best chance of surviving is being able to escape.

Remember, exits aren't limited to doors. Sometimes a window is your only option, as was the case for students who escaped through classroom windows during the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting. It doesn't matter where you escape from, it just matters that you escape.

BARRICADE



If you cannot escape, then you need to put obstacles in front of you and the shooter(s). If you can, stay **19** inside your office or classroom, or somewhere

else with a door. And if you are in an open space or hallway, get to a room and lock the door or find something sufficient to hide behind until you have the opportunity to make an escape.

Note: even being behind a closed door isn't enough; you need to find something to hide behind that will keep you hidden. Unlike in the movies, a desk, car, chair, or door will not stop bullets, and you will end up being shot. The best type of cover is something sturdy like a concrete wall.

ATTACK



When all else fails, attack and disarm the shooter(s). This is your last resort but will be necessary if escaping and barricading yourself fails. If you continue to hide while the shooter(s) are in the same vicinity as you and still firing, you'll be a sitting duck. Your chances of surviving at this point are low, so you might as well fight back and increase your odds. However, you still need to be smart when you decide to attack.

The best time to attack is when the shooter is reloading or is distracted by something. It will literally be a two-second window in some cases, but this is all you need to knock the shooter to the ground and try like hell to disarm him.

One man did just that during the University of North Carolina at Charlotte shooting on April 30, 2019. His name was Riley Howell, and according to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Chief Kerr Putney, "he took the suspect off his feet."

Howell "did exactly what we train people to do — you're either going to run, you're going to hide and shield, or you're going to take the fight to the assailant. Having no place to run and hide, he did the last," said Putney.

He was able to disarm the shooter but lost his life in the process. Without his heroic actions, there would have been a lot more casualties.

WHAT TO DO AFTER



Once the responding officers arrive, keep your hands empty and completely visible; the officers will be on high alert and see anyone they encounter as a potential threat. They might not know what the shooter(s) look like, so be sure to make it clear you are not a threat by keeping your hands up and in plain view.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the police's first objective is to actively search for the shooter(s) and end the incident, so don't be surprised if they pass by injured victims. They may also use tear gas or pepper spray to subdue the threat, which might affect you. Additionally, listen to what the police officers are doing, and don't argue or suggest something else.

You know those emergency instructions we all have to sit through on a flight? You're told to put on your oxygen mask first before helping someone else. Well, it is the same in an active shooter situation; take care of yourself first. Once you're out of harm's way, you might be able to help someone. If someone is wounded, apply pressure directly on the wound or use a tourniquet. If the person is unconscious, roll him or her on their side and try to keep them warm.

And finally, consider enrolling in some sort of therapy to help you and your family move past this traumatic event. The effects might not be visible to the naked eye, so it's a good to let a professional help you move past any problems that arise from surviving a mass shooting.

CONCLUSION



It's horrible that this is something you have to think about and teach your kids, but it is a reality and it doesn't seem to be slowing down. Everyone has opposing views of how to prevent this situation from happening, whether it be more gun control or more background scrutiny for those who have a history of mental health, so it will be a while before this hot political issue gets resolved. In the meantime, it's best to accept an active shooter scenario is possible and prepare yourself as much as you can.

Although nothing can truly prepare you for such a random act of evil, keeping this guide in mind will give a slight edge; and that slight edge might just provide you with a few life-saving seconds.



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