



MEMBERS UPDATE

November 2020

***WHAT SIGHT DO I
REALLY NEED
ON MY AR?***

THE NSRA'S 2020 GIFT GUIDE

COVID UPDATE: IS THE WORST YET TO COME?

Tactical Laser Sight



No technical expertise required...
you will have the Tactical Laser Sight on within 45 seconds or less!

- Fits Any Gun With A Picatinny or Weaver Rail... Including Brands Like: S&W, Sig Sauer, Glock, Remington, Beretta, Rugers and many, many more
- 100% shockproof and will stay zeroed in with each and every shot and is even weatherproof!



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CONTENT



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NSRA Gift Guide 2020

So you want to get your loved ones killer gifts that they'll actually use, value, and look back on as extremely wise and insightful? The NSRA has got you covered. We've combed through all the contenders to hand pick the best of the best Christmas gifts, guaranteed to satisfy while not breaking the bank.



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Tactical Sights Guide

Tactical sights are fun and easy to use. So why do shooters so often make this decision difficult? Simple, they fail to plan and therefore plan to fail. This guide is designed to help you, whether a tactical shooting veteran or a total beginner, select your tactical sights to complement your overall battle plan.



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Worst is Yet to Come

As the weather cools down and the holidays approach, don't let your guard down. The experts are predicting a spike in all things viral and specifically COVID-19. Here's a look at what to expect and what you can do to prepare for a resurgence of the coronavirus and, gulp, more potential lockdowns.



Best Damn Christmas Gift Guide 2020

*Just hear those steel targets jingling,
rimfire plinkering, too...*

*Come on it's lovely weather to throw
some washers together with you.*

*Outside the shells are falling and your
brother-in-law's hollerin' "Woohoo!"*

*Come on it's lovely weather to pop a
cold beer or maybe a few...*

Giddy up, giddy up let's go, folks. We may not be able to fully automate your Christmas shopping this year, but we can help you put this often-stressful, (more stressful this year) holiday process on cruise control.

One of the most precious resources, for each and every of us, is time. That's why, after thinking long and hard about what we could do to spread some holiday cheer, we decided we'd like to help you save some of this precious resource. The NSRA's Best

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Damn Gift Guide 2020 is here to help you knock your Christmas shopping out in one sitting, all online and on-budget.

It may sound crazy, but our goal is to make it so easy, all you need to do is wrap your packages when they arrive at your front doorstep. It's easier than ever to load your sleigh full of tactical gold for the good little boys and girls on your list!



We know what you might be thinking: Surely you can't find truly great gifts for everyone on your list

online and under budget? And anyway, isn't the misery of trying to find parking spaces and standing in extra-long "socially distanced" checkout lines an essential part of the Christmas 2020 experience? And in spite of the biggest Grinch of all, the coronavirus, you can rest assured there are still plenty of people who believe that fighting crowds at the mall is one of the best ways to get into the Christmas spirit.

Meanwhile, if you are someone that doesn't want to take a risk and get deathly ill after going out and getting an ugly sweater for your aunt during yuletide season, you'll want to save precious time (and maybe even your life) and order online this year. This way, you'll have more time to spend with the ones you love without catching the novel coronavirus. While you're at it, you can save a little money, and brain cells too, meaning there's nothing worse than deciding on a gift for a loved one only to find that they've run out at this location... only to be told they have 2 more in stock across town! Eegads! Even more chance to catch the virus, right?

What's more? You really can knock it out of the park with a highly memorable gift that costs way less than you think. And we're talking the kind of gifts here that will keep your recipient smiling for many years to come as they pause to remember you, the thoughtful gift master, who so generously and effortlessly came through massively on Christmas Eve 2020.

What Makes This the "Best Damn List"



One major reason that the NSRA's gift guide is so powerful is that it is the byproduct of – dare we say it – a level of resourcefulness only a self-reliance

publication is capable of. We've been working on this Christmas list all year long, and checking it twice so you can have the best damn gifting cheat sheet around!

So, if you have hunters, outdoor-types, and/or shooting enthusiasts on your list – you have a secret gifting weapon at your disposal. We have several of these one-size-fits-all secret weapons sprinkled throughout this list like a splash of rum in your eggnog.

We know how difficult it is to make decisions once shopping fatigue sets in. You're at a big box shop-o-plex, trying to find that perfect gift that really sums up how much you care. But now all you see is a bunch of overpriced crap, with only a couple items that are remotely interesting. Which one will you pick? It's tunnel vision at its worst.

Our goal with this list is simple: We want to make shopping for your loved ones a cinch by offering up a slate of top-notch, memorable gifts, most of them coming in at \$50 or less. These gifts are tactical, thoughtful and many on this list have the caliber of memento quality that makes them heirloom gifts for your special recipient to have as a keepsake. There's something on this list for everyone on yours, and all of these items are available online too so you don't have to arm-wrestle anyone for the last one on the shelf.

YETI Rambler

Let's start with a dirt simple, one-size-fits-all item that's pretty much perfect for any who, a.) Enjoys cold or hot beverages, and b.) Wants their beverage to stay that way for as long as it takes to enjoy it. For this not-so-rare type of individual (who you may not have any other ideas for), we highly recommend the YETI Rambler.



Yes, for travel mugs perhaps, the Rambler is not exactly cheap. But for a Christmas gift, it's not really all that expensive either. And the fact is that the Rambler, in all honesty, is the highest quality travel mug we've ever tested, and that includes some of the offerings from some very direct competitors.

Interestingly enough, what sets the Rambler apart isn't actually the vacuum insulated, no-sweat design of the tumbler itself; it's the lid. YETI's MagSlider lid is just extremely well insulated and seals up tighter than a duck's butt. We wouldn't go so far as to call it spill-proof, but the lid is substantially better than the imitators.

For around \$35, the 30oz Rambler is about as nice a travel mug as it gets. Plus, there's the cachet of owning something that says YETI on the side, if that does anything for them. If you're shopping for a coffee drinker, the 20oz is ideal. For folks who like to ice it down, we'd suggest the 30oz.

Retail: \$35; Amazon Prime

MCG Tactical Laser Sight



Got a tactical shooting junkie on your list? Or maybe just a gun nut who also loves playing around with new gadgets? As an NSRA subscriber, chances are pretty high that you know somebody (or a dozen somebodies) like this.

Well, here's your chance to come off like a hero, because you can give the gift of great accuracy this year with a high-quality laser sight, developed by a US Army veteran. The MCG gun laser is compatible with pretty much any of the best-selling semiautomatic handguns on the market today.

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Almost all of the current polymer designs come standard with an accessory rail.

Likewise, any sporting rifle, airsoft, or paintball gun with a weaver or Picatinny rail mount is compatible with this laser sight. The housing of this sight is made of high strength aircraft aluminum, with an easily accessible on/off toggle switch. It projects a powerful red laser that's ideal for shooting ranges, varmint hunting, or even dry fire practice.

We can attest to this, using a laser has made us far more aware of the rough spots in our technique, e.g. trigger pull, point of aim, etc. For those who want to take their handgun technique to the next level, laser sights are extremely helpful.

But the number one reason, by far, that makes this a great gift is that it makes you feel like an elite Special Forces badass when you're shooting. That's a pretty great bang for your buck when it comes to stocking stuffers.

Retail: \$25 at Mycrisisgear.com/laser

Reebow Gear Tactical Assault Backpack

You may not be able to make your loved ones carry around a "bug out bag," but you can buy them the bag. We're joking, of course... or are we?



Look, everyone needs a good sturdy backpack. That's probably something all of us self-reliance types can agree on. Bug out bags get a lot of headlines in the world of "survivalism," but the utility of a good backpack goes far beyond an Armageddon scenario.

If you're going to the gun range, the deer lease, or just to visit some friend out of town, the same backpack can serve all these purposes, provided it's well-sized and well-made.

There are lots of great options out there when it comes to packs, but the combination of practicality

and price offered by the Reebow Tactical Assault pack is virtually unbeatable. With a 34-liter capacity, this pack won't hold everything and the kitchen sink. That's not a bad thing, however, because it means this pack is ideally sized for comfortable carrying.

The Reebow tactical backpack is compatible with the MOLLE system (Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment). This makes it ideal for carrying all types of small gear, or just for looking tactical and cool. If the person you're shopping for is a "range rat," they'll no doubt appreciate the compartments, ideal for storing ammo, magazines, etc.

In fact, the straps and padding are by all counts very comfortable, more so than other packs that are twice the price. The Reebow is super sturdy, is compatible with a 2.5-liter hydration bladder, and it comes with a cool American flag patch. All this, for a price of \$38 bucks on Amazon.

Retail: \$38 Amazon Prime

Skygenius Powerful Binoculars 10X50mm



A good set of binoculars is a must-have for anyone who loves to spend time outdoors. It doesn't matter if your favorite destination is the beach, high in the mountains, or on a guided safari,

haven't we all been on a sightseeing tour or three where we wished for superhuman vision?

Whether you use them for birdwatching, people watching, or even checking in on livestock from across the pasture, magnification is key to observing the details of exactly what's going on. And don't even get us started on ballgames... a powerful set of binoculars come in handy there too.

These binoculars have an anti-slip grip and are durable and solid, allowing them to stand up to rugged outdoor use. But the features that interests users the most about these binoculars is the clear and brilliant vision, large field of view and power

that gives ideal, long distance clarity. That's where these binoculars really shine.

For any hunter or adventurer who's shopped a pair of capable binoculars, you quickly discover that \$100 or \$200 is considered an "entry-level" price. The 10X magnification, teamed with special corrective optical coating, allows superior light transmission and does the heavy lifting for these binoculars. They also offer clarity and a vivid image with bright colors that you'd expect to find in a name brand set that's five times the price.

If you happen to know anyone who'd like the ability to count the whiskers on a trophy buck at dawn, these are an excellent choice.

Retail: \$45 Amazon Prime

Mantuole Heated Sleeping Bag



If you have hunters, campers, national park enthusiasts, or even college students on your list, a heated sleeping bag is pretty much a slam dunk gift idea. There're no more cold camping nights with this sleeping bag, and it can be powered with a car charger or cellphone charger with 5V/2A. Simply plug in the USB port, turn the switch on, and the sleeping bag will warm you up.

Whether you are sleeping in the backyard or doing some mountain and beach camping, this bag's design

features waterproof nylon and 190TC polyester outer shell that stand up to the most rugged nights out in the elements. It's also self-contained, coming with its own carrying bag – a must for easy portability. Keep the power off when it's not frigid out and for other season variabilities.

Thing is, sleeping bags are one of those items everyone should own from a self-reliance perspective. Of course, they're synonymous with tent camping, but they're just as useful if you're on a road trip, RVing, or even in the event of a sudden evacuation. Sometimes you just don't know when you'll need comfortable and warm way to get some shuteye outdoors or even on someone's couch (or dorm room floor).

Retail: \$70 Amazon Prime

Oaskys Camping Sleeping Bag



If you don't want to splurge on a heated sleeping bag, then this 3-season sleeping bag also makes for a killer Christmas gift. It's good for someone to use if they won't be camping in freezing temps. In fact, it is better designed for the warm & cool weather in summer, spring and fall.

While it's not rated for arctic temperatures, that's actually a good thing in our view. We find that a nice 3-season bag is far more practical for the vast majority of users. They're also a lot more cost effective, coming in at around \$25 as an Amazon's choice product.

The weather-resistant design of the Oasky bag keeps you warm and prevents you from getting damp. Also, the separated zipper at the bottom opens to let your feet come out and cool off from the breeze in sizzling temperatures. The half-circle hood with adjustable drawstring on this sleeping bag will keep your head warm during cooler weather. Each sleeping bag comes equipped with a lightweight compression sack w/straps, allowing for easy storage and carrying for those times you need to bug out quickly.

Retail: \$25 Amazon Prime

Case XX Trapper

While we're on the topic of items that everyone in America should own, let's take a look at a super handy tool that folds neatly into a pocket, purse, or vest. We're not talking about just any pocket knife here, we're talking about a Case XX pocket knife.



This iconic American company out of Bradford, PA still makes the highest quality pocket knives around, with the best materials, and they're still made by hand. The Trapper model is as tried and true as they come, a best seller for Case for 100 years. How's that for a track record?

So why did we pick this knife? First and foremost, the Trapper is a very versatile pocket knife with a blade that holds an edge like few others. Available in either Chrome Vanadium (CV) or TrueSharp surgical stainless steel, one of the highly desirable features of a Case knife is the fact that they can be easily sharpened. According to the collectors, the CV tends to sharpen a bit easier, while the stainless version holds an edge a bit longer.

The second reason we picked this knife is there's a bustling collector's market for these knives, believe it or not. Maybe you'll get bit by the collecting bug or maybe not. If you do, you'll find the price for one ranges from \$50 to around \$80, depending on the style and where you buy it. Either way, it's cool to know that these things are an excellent bartering item, and that feature is included free of charge.

But the main reason we like the Trapper is that it's just so damn cool. You can choose a color and material for the scales that you think suits your recipient and they get a piece of American history. Who wouldn't want that?

Retail: \$53 Amazon Prime (price is for bone handle style shown)

MCG Reflex "Red Dot"



Declared NSRA's #1 Shooting Item of 2020 after extensive field testing, the MCG Reflex "Red Dot" is the ultimate stocking stuffer! During field testing, this little darling's reflex sight consistently delivered the most dramatic improvements in both speed and accuracy

over traditional iron sights and traditional low-magnification optics.

There's a very powerful reason this technology was adopted by the US Military – and it's the same reason this optic performed so well in our testing. Simply put, it's the most user-friendly shooting technology out there.

Anyone who enjoys plinking, hunting, or target shooting can attest to the fact that the less they have to struggle to concentrate on their sight picture, the better their groups tend to get. This red dot sight is like a little computer screen on top of your rifle, and its reflex sights give you a video game-like ability to aim, allowing you to focus on trigger pull, breath technique, etc. No more struggling to align

the front and rear sights and see the target clearly.

Ironically, the MCG Red Dot is just as popular with senior citizen shooters as it is with the younger generation shooters who love high-tech. The reason is, this sight plays well with glasses, and is the great equalizer for those who have poor eyesight. With the Red Dot, both the target and the glowing green or red (6 color and shape combinations) appear on the same plane.

This compact shooting device mounts easily on all Picatinny and Weaver rails, as well as many other scope rail systems. It's a bolt-on job that takes less than 2 minutes to install. Then, blam-o, you've got a high tech targeting system that makes shooting so much more fun!

Retail: \$45 Mycrisisgear.com/reddot

Estwing Fireside Friend

When it comes to seasonal gifts with an outdoorsy flair, it's hard to beat this one. We've tested, recommended, and received tons of positive feedback regarding the Fireside Friend over the years.



So, what makes this small camp axe gadget so popular? For starters, it packs a surprising amount of punch and utility into one very compact tool. If you've ever owned a hatchet, you know how useful it isn't for tasks like splitting wood. Splitting axes, on the other hand, are huge and heavy, not particularly convenient to bring on a camping trip or swing in the backyard while tending your fire bowl.

In our experience, multi-tools are like multi-tasking. Yes, they can do several things. No, they don't compare well with a single purpose tool. The Fireside Friend is the rare exception. The backside doubles as a heavy shop sledge, while the grind on the blade is sharp enough to work as a hatchet.

It's only 4lbs and 14 inches tall, yet it splits wood as well as a full-sized splitting axe. The size and weight of the Fireside Friend is designed to provide the optimal leverage and splitting power, and it's a perfect size to fit in your bugout backpack too. Plus, we've always appreciated the solid full-metal construction and the shock reduction grip.

This splitting tool/wood maul checks a ton of boxes, making it a popular choice for a very wide variety of users and settings. Hey, don't believe us; go read some reviews online and you'll get a sense for how pleased people are with this thing.

Long story short, if you're shopping for someone who like to spend time around the fire, why not get them a friend?

Retail: Lowe's \$30

Arcturus Military Wool Blanket



When it comes to items you didn't know you needed, military wool blankets are high on the list -- often gaining more altitude the longer you own one. We received a US Army blanket as a gift roughly a decade ago. At the time, we said "Thank you," and kinda mentally shrugged it off, thinking: What the heck am I gonna do with this?

Fast forward about 6 months and we had used the blanket for sleeping, picnicking, and used it in place of a tarp for making repairs on the underside of a truck when stranded on a ranch road. Since then, it's been a seat cover, outdoor area rug, and a warm dry surface to lie on while long distance hunting in the backcountry.

Obviously, being a military-spec design these are durable as can be, machine washable for convenience sake. One part saddle blanket, one part area rug, military blankets are also generously large, over 5' X 7' in size. Bottom line, these blankets are a unique, lifetime gift and they're extremely useful at home or out camping.

Retail: \$40; Amazon Prime

Stanley 700 Amp Camo Jump Starter

Sometimes, the people who need automotive items most are the very ones who know the least about cars and maintenance.

If you know a young driver who's just learning the ropes, or a forgetful driver who routinely goes 15,000 miles between oil changes, this is the kind of person we're talking about.



But any type of driver, meticulous or not, could seriously benefit from having one of these babies in their trunk. The Stanley FatMax jump starter is a virtual "get out of jail free" card for drivers who forgot to turn their lights off or roll up with a full shopping cart full of groceries only to notice they have a flat tire.

For anyone who likes road trips or makes long trips regularly, a portable battery pack is an excellent thing to keep on hand. Instead of jumper cables, flashlights, and an air-compressor, this jump starter does it all.

Plus, this Stanley can be used like a light-duty generator. With a simple inverter plug, it can run a stereo, Christmas lights, and charge your smartphone at the same time, pretty handy for campers, hunters, and boaters.

All that in a relatively small and lightweight package makes the Stanley Fatmax Jump Starter a slam dunk gift.

Retail: \$56 at Walmart

Leatherman Squirt PS4



When it comes to the difference between having the right tool when you need it and being up a creek without a paddle, it's really nice to have a Leatherman. Although the Leatherman Squirt PS4 doesn't list a paddle as one of its many functions, this tool covers a lot of bases and covers them well.

Leatherman Multitool, the Squirt is a miniaturized, pocket-friendly EDC tool. In fact, it comes standard with a split ring, ready to hop on your key ring. All folded up, the tool is smaller than many car key fobs these days.

The highlights are that this impressive mini tool is insanely "carryable," sleek, and performs its 9 tool functions at a high level. The tools in this arsenal, for the record, are 3 screwdrivers, a knife, scissors, a wire cutter, pliers, a file, and a bottle opener (but who really need that?).

Sure, it's not suited for heavy duty work in the oil fields, but this kind of tool is not designed as out an out replacement for any tool (besides a pocketknife). Instead, its virtue is being there when you need it and being incredibly compact and portable. Read: It loves pockets, purses, backpacks, etc. It's the thing to have on your person when you need it.

While this tool is definitely jealousy-inducing for the Everyday Carry (EDC) crowd, its appeal is far broader. This is a great tool for college students, 9-to-5ers, and people who don't typically carry any EDC tools. Comes in three colors: Black, red and blue.

9 Retail: \$40 at leatherman.com

Quarantine Christmas Ornaments

The coronavirus has given us the gift that keeps on giving, so you might want to capture the unprecedented social distancing and quarantining for prosperity in Christmases to come with a customized Christmas ornament. After all, it's been a trying, uncertain year, and these Quarantine Christmas Ornaments by Out on a Limb can put a smile on your family and friend's faces.



Made out of maple plywood with a polyurethane finish, the company that makes them also takes custom wording requests. So, if you want to remember the historical year of 2020 in a fun way and give a special message, this ornament is the gift to get.

Retail: \$13

The Wrap-Up



Bottom line: We really hope we've helped take at least some of the pressure off when it comes to your Christmas shopping. These gifts are cool, on-budget, and most of them appeal to both soccer moms, grandfathers, and teenagers as well.

Plus, you can rest easy that each of these, beyond simply being desirable, also have a self-reliance dimension that give the recipient ammunition to take charge of their own readiness if the need arises.

If that sounds like music to your ears, we urge you to hop online and knock that shopping out with some classic gifts. Then get back to what's truly important this season: Hunting. Just kidding, we meant spending time with your family and friends.



WHAT TYPE OF SIGHT DO I REALLY NEED FOR MY TACTICAL RIFLE?

Yes, it may seem like a rudimentary topic for some grizzled veterans of *ye olde shooting range*. But the truth is that it's one of the most common questions we get here at the NSRA every day, from both novices and seasoned shooters alike.

And to be frank, if the sheer number of times we've watched obsessive gun guys burn through expensive optic after expensive optic, trying to find that "perfect scope" that meets their specs, means anything at all... It's clear as day they could have saved a lot of time, money, and frustration if they had begun their quest by reading a guide just like this one.

The reason isn't that that finding the right optic is incredibly difficult. Nor is it that there are a million options out there to choose from (although there are). Truth be told, despite all the marketing rhetoric about "new technology," it's important to remember that most sights operate off of principles that are over a century old, anything but cutting edge. We'll

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delve into some of the specifics on this later on.

Right now, the key concept to grasp is that zeroing the "right" optic on your tactical carbine is a great feeling, and powerful. But it should mark the end of a process through which you made a number of informed decisions about how you want to use your rifle.

There are lots of important decisions when it comes to customizing your rifle, but choosing an optic is one of the most crucial of all. It will define your philosophy of use for that particular rifle, giving it a focus that will fill a specific role in your SHTF battle plan.

WHY YOU NEED THIS GUIDE

As previously stated, what makes this type of decision a bit tricky isn't so much the overwhelming number of optics on the market, or the complexity of the process. Instead, it boils down to two particular factors, one that's very complimentary of our current level of rifle technology and another

that's pretty juvenile (yet it's usually the primary reason people buy anything). We won't keep you in suspense long, this reason is, of course, ego.



As sad as it may seem, many a grown adult has made their entire optics decision based on a glamorized image they saw in a catalog or maybe movie. They want their AR-15 (or whatever) to look exactly like the one the SEAL carried in such-and-such movie. If that hero had a red dot, they want a red dot. If that hero had a sniper optic, that's what they want too. Call it a "tribute" if you want; but it's no way for a reasonable adult to come to a decision about their optics needs.

The other reason we alluded to early on a much more positive note is that today's tactical rifles are incredibly capable on several levels. Short range, mid-range, and even long range, these rifles can drive tacks. Thus, it can be difficult to make decisions about what specific goals you set for yours.

Will you be using your rifle for hunting? What game, specifically? Will you train at tactical courses or do you want to bag out and shoot at long distances? Today's modern sporting rifles are chambered in a variety of rounds that are all excellent for medium to long range, but this may not be how you intend to use your MSR. In fact, we'd venture to guess that it's not what you had in mind.

There's no one optic that covers all of these scenarios perfectly. Then again, you're probably going to gravitate toward a somewhat limited range of usage. One good way to pare down your options is to consider both your plan for this rifle and your pre-existing arsenal.

Do you already have an open sights tactical carbine? Or do you perhaps already own a scoped and doped long range bolt-action. These factors can and should drive your decisions about selecting the right optic for your needs. Your goal should be to outfit your rifle to target the role you need covered in your arsenal with utmost precision, not to needlessly overlap with all the other firearms you own.

FLIP-UP IRON SIGHTS



While you won't hear it made often, there's a very good argument for retaining or upgrading the iron sights on your tactical rifle. And while co-witnessing (i.e. aligning an optic to use in tandem with your iron sights) is one of these reasons, it's not the most compelling one.

Long story short, iron sights work very well. This is particularly true if your vision is moderate to good. While some shooters will go on and on about how mastering iron sights was a pre-requisite in their military training, iron sights aren't quite as intuitive as many upgraded optics if your eyesight is poor. However, a good set of iron sights never runs out of batteries.

Given enough training and familiarity, you can certainly learn to shoot excellent short to mid-range groups with iron sights. Lastly, iron sights are more durable than most optics and are less sensitive to being knocked off zero.

If your goal is to use your tactical rifle as a knockaround gun, a truck gun, or in a backpacker capacity, then the chances are pretty good that you'll be banging this weapon around frequently. Each time you do so, you may have doubts about whether

your weapon is holding zero. That's not the most comfortable feeling when you need to make a shot that counts.

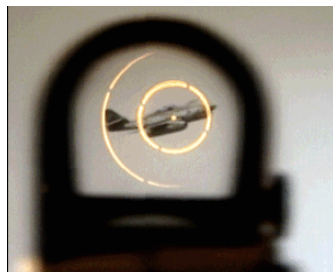
Don't get us wrong; we love red dots, lasers and riflescopes. The fact is however, these options aren't as rugged as those old school irons – not by a long shot. If you plan to take most of your shots at targets inside the 80-yard line, let's say perhaps a deer, hog, or any other large game species, then iron sights will serve you well. They do have limitations, but limits can be pushed significantly with training.

RED DOT SIGHTS



This class of weapon sights, commonly referred to as “red dots,” encompasses a surprisingly wide variety of styles, applications, and even colors. In this section, we'll break down some of the key differences and bust some common myths.

But let's start with one key concept that apparently requires a refresher. A “red dot” sight does not project a red “dot” outward onto the actual target, nor any other color dot for that matter. Instead that's how laser sights function. You can thank some limp-wristed marketing clowns (who've probably never even held a firearm) for muddying up that distinction.



The principle behind a red dot sight is simple. The shooter views the target through a lens onto which a glowing dot and/or reticle is projected. If you've

never used one before, the first time feels a little like you're playing a video game. However, even though the technology feels cutting edge, the concept was patented by Howard Grubb in 1901. In fact, reflex sights were actually used in fighter planes as early as 1918. But we digress.

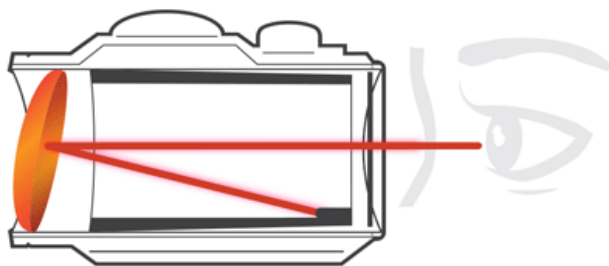
The primary application for this type of sight is for rapid target acquisition plus accuracy, both of which this type of sight excels at. Red dots achieve this result by superimposing a highly visible reticle (for quick acquisition) on a single focal plane (eliminating the need to line up front and rear sights). Thus, while you could certainly argue that iron sights can be more effective at long distances, that often depends on the user's eyesight.

A glowing dot or crosshairs is easier for the eye to acquire than iron sights, while the use of a single plane of view makes it easier for the eye to simply focus on the target. In addition, most red dots have “unlimited eye relief,” which means that the position of your eye in relation to the optic is flexible, unlike a high-powered riflescope. This is why, if your plans for your rifle include quick shooting, tactical courses, or regularly targeting objects within 60 yards, a red dot will often be your best bet.

Tip: Here's where we've witnessed many tactical shooters go wrong. They bought a tactical rifle in order to fire quickly on hogs or tactical shooting ranges, but they saw a picture of a scoped AR-15 and fell in love. As soon as you install a traditional riflescope on a semi-automatic rifle, you're slowing down your acquisition time considerably. That's why most times we recommend a red dot.

REFLEX VS. HOLOGRAPHIC RED DOTS

This is one of those “technical distinctions” that don't necessarily make a major difference to the end user. Still, being knowledgeable about your equipment is never a bad thing.

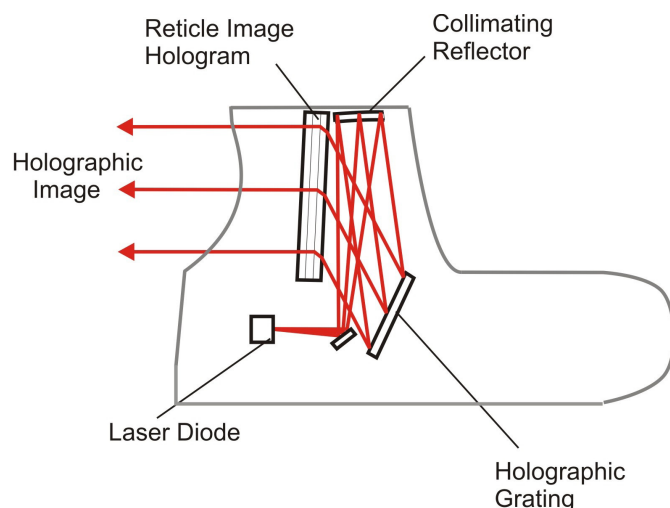


So, here's a quick rundown: Reflex red dots are called such because they utilize an aiming reticle that is projected onto a lightly mirrored objective lens (the lens facing the object you're targeting). This superimposed image is then reflected back to your eye.

These sights are very common and the technology, as we mentioned, is over 100 years old. But if it ain't broke, don't fix it, right? Reflex optics are very accurate and also affordable. They also come in a variety of configurations, the main ones being a tube type (which looks like a sawed-off riflescope) and the "heads up" version, which utilizes only an objective lens (like the MCG Red Dot Sight).



While there aren't many downsides with the reflex technology, one factor to consider is that because the objective lens is partially mirrored it blocks a bit of the sight's light gathering ability. In addition, the curvature of the glass can create a bit of a parallax effect, where the "dot" appears to move around as the shooter's head position changes. Given that most red dots use no magnification, this parallax is minimal.



13 Holographic red dots use a laser, carefully applied to create a virtual "dot" in space, often appearing to the shooter at up to 50 yards. The laser is sandwiched in

between two layers of glass and allows for slightly better light gathering than a reflex optic.

Holographic technology is exciting to some minds and simply confusing to others. But from the layperson's perspective, the main difference from reflex optics is that holographic sights are basically always in the "heads up" configuration.

TACTICAL SCOPES



Stepping up in precision and range comes a sub-category of riflescopes designed to bridge the gap between long distance accuracy and faster target acquisition. This type of configuration is commonly used by snipers, hunters, and target shooters as a "best of both worlds" type of solution.

For example, let's say your goal with a new MSR is to create the ideal hunting rig, with the precision necessary for deer hunting yet the quick acquisition capabilities necessary for varmint hunting and/or hog hunting. A low-magnification optic with very generous eye-relief, and potentially an illuminated reticle, is an ideal choice to expand your effective range and still retain some ability to get on target quickly.

These scopes have several distinct characteristics that set them apart from the average riflescope, though perhaps the standout is magnification. In a world of 24X scopes, it seems underwhelming to put a 4X scope on a rifle. The feeling is almost like... why would anyone do such a thing?

The reason is to add magnification without losing a ton of acquisition speed. Because these optics are often in the 1-6X magnification range, the time it

takes the shooter to get on target drops significantly. This is both a function of a less jarring jump in magnification and a greater eye relief.

Here's a quick refresher on the concept of "eye relief" for you. Simply put, the greater the eye relief, the easier it is to get a clear sight picture in an optic. You've no doubt experienced this at some point: As you first peer down the tube of a typical scope, you often have to adjust the position of your eye until you get a full view. Otherwise you're looking at a dark circle with a small portion of the target/crosshairs in view.



The other keys to an ideal tactical scope are its lightweight and compact. Let's begin with weight, since is pretty straightforward. Obviously, there's no lower limit in this category, but if we were to put a ceiling on how heavy a tactical scope should be, we'd say 24 ounces, maximum. Ideally, you'd like it to be somewhere in the neighborhood of 15-18 ounces.

When it comes to compactness, this is a more subjective category. If you own a 20X optic, then you already know the typical "long range" scope is itself pretty dang long, often a foot or more. Clearly, that's not on the compact end of the spectrum. Tactical scopes tend to fall below 10 inches in length, with 4-5 inches of eye relief. Thus, there's significantly more maneuverability with both your weapon and your shooting position.

Another fairly common feature on these scopes is an illuminated crosshair, often referred to as IR (Illuminated Reticle, not to be confused with Infrared). This can be helpful in low-light situations or those where your target is a dark color that makes a black reticle hard to see. Thus, any kind of

electrification seeks to help make aiming process substantially clearer and faster. The dimmer the lighting, the more helpful a feature like this becomes. Even in bright conditions, the illumination makes your reticle unmistakably clear, similar to a red dot.

LONG RANGE RIFLESCOPES



We won't spend too many words on this topic, since traditional riflescopes are both A.) By far the most common and familiar optic to the shooting public and B.) Not in any way specific to tactical rifles.

Long range shooting and modern sporting rifles do, in fact, pair together quite well. The 5.56 NATO round and the 7.62 NATO rounds are both capable out to long ranges and you can certainly build a highly capable long-range rifle using the MSR framework. There are tons of examples of semi-automatic rifles on the market that are specifically designed to cycle through larger, heavy rounds intended for big game hunting and/or distance shooting.

If your goal with a current build is to shoot targets at 500 yards and beyond, then you're going to need a good high-powered optic. What characteristics should you target specifically? For the most part, we recommend essentially that exact same qualities you'd look for in a scope you intend to use on a bolt-action rifle.

The one major distinction you should anticipate with a tactical rifle setup is mounting hardware. Yes, your rifle is most likely decked out in user friendly Picatinny rails, but you may find the geometry of

looking down a riflescope vastly different and/or uncomfortable.



The remedy for this is to do plenty of research and to plan to try several variations of risers/mounts to find one that fits you. It sounds strange maybe, but the key for mounting the right long-range optic to your rifle may be the mounting hardware, not the optic itself. The good news is that there are many options that allow greater flexibility, such as look-through risers that allow your iron sights to remain functional even after you install a scope.


CONCLUSION

To wrap up our guide on how to select the right optic for your tactical rifle, we'll return to a concept we began with. Today's MSRs are incredibly capable in so many scenarios and distances, shopping for an optic can lead you down a path of analysis paralysis. Or worse still, you may purchase a very expensive optic you don't use.

The best guard against this is to create a clear, well-defined plan for your rifle. If you can be realistic about what types of shooting you plan to use your rifle for and, perhaps more importantly, what types you're not likely to engage in, you can move through building your rig with confidence and clarity.



The Worst is Yet to Come: Preparing for COVID This Winter



If you're like most Americans, then you're tired of dealing with the coronavirus. Unfortunately, it's not tired of dealing with us, and we're going to have to live with the consequences. As medical experts have been telling us all along, it's expected to have a second wave in the fall/winter. And that second wave is projected to be much, much worse than the first one.

We now know that President Trump and a number of his cabinet members recently contracted the virus. That simply illustrates how incredibly contagious this virus is that, even with all the protocol in place, even the Secret Service couldn't stop the virus from getting to the President. The good news is that we all know the truth now, and we can all come together to beat this virus.

To make matters even worse, we'll also be dealing with flu season. When you put these two things together, you get a perfect storm of nastiness. Experts have already projected that we'll lose as many people in the last three months of the year as we did during the first six months of the crisis. So, if you haven't known someone who has died yet, prepare yourself because it's probably coming.

How can we deal with increased cases and deaths?
And what will we do if the national situation gets

way out of control, and yet business/schools don't close?

Prepare Now

The most important thing you can do is prepare yourself right now. That includes with groceries and also mentally. There's going to come a time during the fall/winter when you're not going to want to go out at all. Don't wait until that time to stock up. By doing it now, you can buy a few extras each time you go to the grocery store, rather than having to try to buy everything all at once.

Be Aware of the Facts

Cold weather and snow will not have a negative impact on the virus. If anything, they'll have a positive impact. In fact, a recent study showed that for every percent the humidity drops, the risk of getting COVID-19 increases by 7-8 percent. This is why so many people were spared in humid areas of the country during the summer, and yet we still had 1,000+ deaths every single day.

The only way we're going to prevent a catastrophe is if we all stay in our own homes. And I mean without going to school or work, either. The sad truth is that as the cold season sends us indoors,

we'll take the virus with us. And since it passes through the air, we're going to have a much harder time avoiding it.

Had it Before? You Can Get It Again

Recent studies have shown that people can – and do – get COVID-19 again. This indicates that we either all have an immune response of only two to three months or that at least some of us do. Either way, this goes to show that someone who had COVID-19 in May should not assume that they'll still be immune in November. Instead, taking this approach will be very dangerous, and it may even lead to your death.

We're All Facing a Financial Crisis



Yes, President Trump signed an executive order that sent \$300 weekly to most unemployed individuals. But this isn't enough to drag us out of our financial demise, especially if that fall/winter forces us to close down a lot of businesses again. What's needed is a big push into the economy without a lot of extras.

No matter which side of the aisle you're on, you can clearly see the writing on the wall. Continuing to argue about things like funding for an FBI building and giving employers immunity from lawsuits isn't going to get it done. We need to cut out the fat and get money into the hands of taxpayers, and we need to do it fast.

Consider for a moment that the only money that (almost) every American adult received was \$1,200.

17 That was spent a long time ago. It's time to help

the country again. Every other major nation has done it, with some countries even giving temporary universal income of \$1,000 to \$2,000 per person, per month. Rather than trying to “prevent a panic,” we need to think seriously about what will help stop the bleeding in the U.S. and then take action on it.

Healthcare is A Big Issue



Healthcare workers have been sounding the alarm for several months now, and it's not going to get any better. If we have a second wave that's just as bad as the first one, we're going to push some of our healthcare systems past the brink. And if we have a worst-case scenario, we're going to break the systems entirely. Yet, a lot of people still don't believe this is happening.

Here's the reality: In 2020 so far, we've seen a few states have to decide who lives and who dies. We've seen refrigerated trucks and ice-skating rinks turned into morgues. We've had a large number of workers get sick, which makes the entire system less likely to be able to handle your emergency. In short, we've seen a lot of things we never thought we would, and we're just getting started.

If the resurgence comes – and it almost certainly will – we're going to be in big trouble. The healthcare system has had some time to recover, but it's not enough. Doctors have literally killed themselves from the things they've seen. Forcing more doctors and nurses into this environment again isn't healthy and it isn't safe.

Even worse is that fact that millions of Americans don't have healthcare. In other parts of the world,

COVID-19 is simply paid for by the government. In the U.S., though, we're each on our own. Yes, it was said at one point that all the costs associated with COVID-19 would be covered, but that just hasn't held up. Therefore, if you get sick, you might even have to decide what's more important: Your life or keeping your bills low enough to handle them.

Businesses and Schools

Okay, here's the really difficult part. What do you do if your business and/or kid's school decides not to close down? The first thing we'd suggest is finding out if there's any way that you can telecommute. This is going to help reduce the odds of furthering the virus, after all, and for many businesses, that's very important.

What do you do if you can't telecommute? You can follow the guidelines very strictly. Whenever you're within six feet of someone, you can wear a mask. You can also help by calling off if you feel sick.

One of the reasons that schools have been told they must be back in session is because of the false assurance that COVID-19 doesn't affect children. However, that's quite simply not true. It may not affect them as harshly as it affects adults, but it does affect them, and some have died. And there's also the very real risk of a student bringing it home to their parents and other loved ones. Therefore, if your student's school does offer online classes, be sure to have your child take them.

Your Guide to Preparing



Now that you know how dire things really are, it's definitely time to start planning. Let's take a look at what you should be stocking up on.

1. Dried Beans – This is one of the easiest items to work with because they're good for a really long time.

2. Non-Perishable Items – Other non-perishable goods like Pasta Roni and Macaroni and Cheese are going to be your go-to staples. This may not be the best food for you to eat, but it keeps for at least a year and will provide you with the calories you need to survive.

3. Toilet Paper – We all know what happened the first time, and most stores still haven't fully recovered. Stock up on toilet paper immediately.

4. Paper Towels – The other item that's really hard to get still is paper towels. Yet this is perfect item for cleaning. Find as many rolls as you can because it's going to be much harder to find soon.

5. Water – So far, there hasn't actually been a need for water. But we always say, why take any chances?

6. Frozen Goods – Your frozen food lasts longer and will keep vegetables and fruit in good condition for a significantly longer period of time than fresh goods.

7. Clorox Wipes – There will be a need to keep your place as clean as possible. Getting Clorox wipes – or any reasonable store substitute – will help you stay ahead of this curve.

8. Hand Sanitizer – Is your supply of hand sanitizer running out already? It's time to stock back up again.

9. Soap – Washing your hands is imperative, but soap has been really tricky to find since this whole mess got started. Keep an eye out, and when you do find it, be prepared to buy it in bulk.

Let's Talk About Face Masks



Here's the simple answer when it comes to face masks: Everyone needs to wear them. Doctors have stated emphatically that there is really no reason why someone can't wear one, so the odds are that someone is lying if they say they have a medical exception. The much more likely reason for someone to have difficulty with a mask is because they have a panic attack. Teach yourself (and others) how to wear a mask correctly, and they won't be that big of a deal.

Please be aware that everyone needs to have at least two face masks. This is so that you can wash one while you're wearing the other. If you do not have at least two face masks, get shopping before they become hard to find again.

The best thing about a fabric face mask is that you can get it in a design that suits your personality. For example, if you're a big fan of the Detroit Tigers, you can get a face mask that spells this out to the world. Alternatively, if you just like a specific color, you can get that too.

Getting into Shape



One of the best things you can do for yourself is to get in better shape. After all, 60 percent of Americans have at least one health complication, and this places us in a terrible condition to try to fight COVID-19. Even if all you do is walk five times a week for 20 – 30 minutes and start eating a bit healthier, it will help.

Remember: You don't have to wear a face mask unless you're going to be close to other people. In other words, if you're going to work out in your backyard, you can do so without a mask. If, on the other hand, you're planning to work out at a local park, you'll want to put your face mask on.

Avoid High Risk Activities

Now that fall is here, you'll want to be especially careful about what type of activities you partake in. For example, eating on the sidewalk is much safer than eating inside a restaurant. What does that mean? Well, if you'd truly like to be safe, you can't eat out at restaurants that no longer have outside dining.

Movie theaters are also a high-risk activity that shouldn't be risked. It's difficult enough that we're all going to the grocery store (use curbside pickup whenever possible). We shouldn't be adding to this problem by taking on other high-risk activities.

Weddings, funerals, and other personal gatherings are also off limits. After all, in Maine, a wedding of 62 people ended up with 30 testing positive. And, before long, this had spread out to more than 140 people. One woman even died who hadn't gone to the wedding at all. She just happened to have the bad luck of seeing one of the revelers after the ceremony. Therefore, and we can't stress this enough, don't participate in risky activities. It just isn't worth it.

Don't Let Others Convince You That You're Wrong

There was a lot of this going around in the summer, even with 1,000+ people still dying almost every day. We ask that this fall/winter, that you blow off the opinions of others who don't agree

with you. If they want to take their life into their own hands, let them. But don't let them convince you that you're wrong. Just simply part ways by saying "we'll agree to disagree." The worst thing that happens is you stay home for a few months without needing to. That's sure a hell of a lot better than going out and dying.



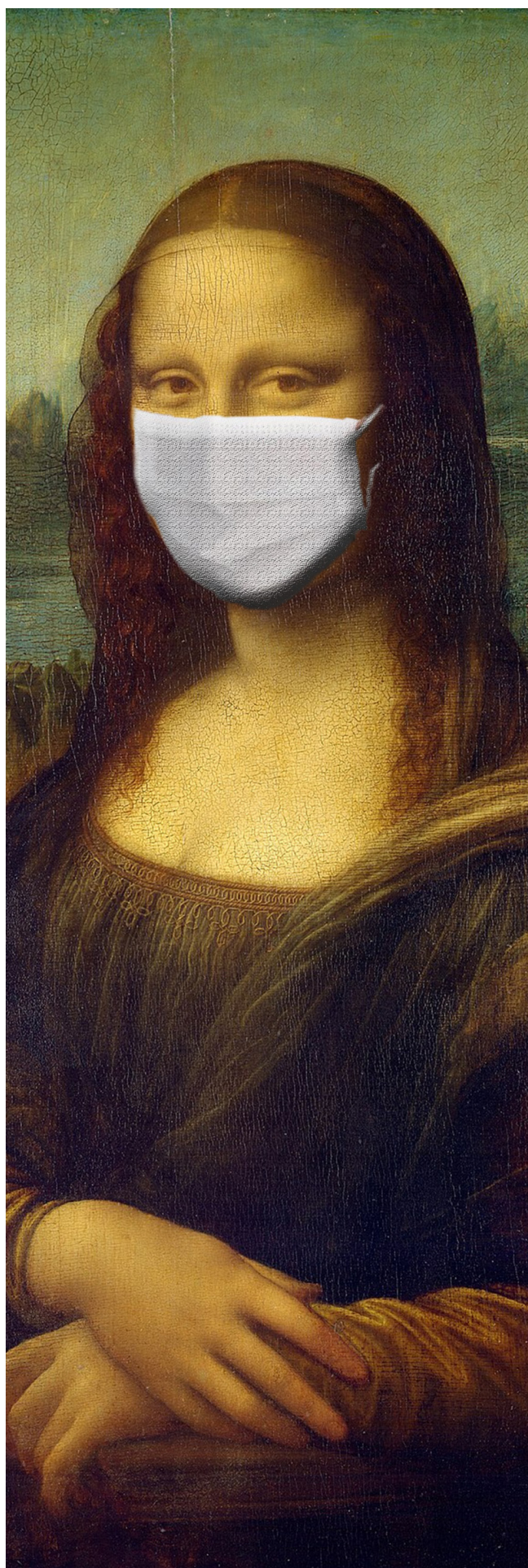
Final Thoughts

COVID-19 is nowhere near gone. Yes, some people may act like it is, but that's not based on any facts. We know that some of you are probably rolling your eyes right now, but trust us: After all, we live in Texas, and we've seen it firsthand.

Although there are those urging us to return to "business as usual," it's important we all understand that history repeats – including the type of lockdowns we experienced in the springtime. If we succeed at keeping the virus contained in our local areas, we can continue on the course of reopening businesses and enjoying our favorite activities again. If we fail, chances are we face more lockdowns in our future. Regardless of whether these are constitutional or not, these mandates will likely be enforced.

As much as we'd all like to think that we can simply go back out into the world, it's just not safe to do so. This is especially true if you're elderly or have a preexisting condition. Pandemics don't care about your personal beliefs, political system, or anything else. The only thing they care about is getting more fuel to spread. Don't help COVID-19 become an

20 even bigger threat by letting yourself get sick.



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