



MEMBERS UPDATE

March 2021



10 REASONS YOU NEED A DRONE

Best Survival Movies of All Time: Part II

Top 7 Sidearms for Serious Shooters

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7 Sidearms for Serious Shooters

There are lots of handguns on the market so light and compact, you'll forget they're in your waistband. And then there are hand cannons that will stop a charging grizzly bear. But are they a joy to shoot? We set out to find the best handguns for those who want to burn through hundreds of rounds per month and these are our 7 finalists.



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Best Survival Movies Part II

Perhaps now in 2021 more than ever, we can all relate to the human drama that accompanies overcoming hard times. With a year-long pandemic in our rear view and uncertainty ahead, we all could use an old-fashioned American movie night. When it comes to movies with a self-reliance twist, these are the best titles of all time.



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Why YOU Need a Drone

Drone technology has never been more powerful, user-friendly, and even affordable to the average consumer. But those are the features, not the benefits. If you're a hunter, farmer, or outdoor enthusiast of any kind, it's time you take a second look at what you stand to gain from having one of these flying robots at your disposal.



Top 7 Sidearms for Serious Shooters

Lots of today's semiautomatics claim to "do it all," but we've heard boasts like that from the jack of all trades before, haven't we? And no matter how you slice it, there's just nothing like having the right tool for the job. Given that a firearm is most certainly a tool, the old right tool, right job adage applies to your handguns very specifically.

If you want to go to the range and burn through a whole mess of training rounds, you're going to need a weapon that is not only ultra-reliable, but also engineered for that type of shooting. As we often tell shooters at the NSRA, the right weapon chambered in the right caliber is the most important accelerant for your live fire training.

It's not unlike choosing the right vehicle. If you plan on putting a lot of miles on your handgun, then you're going to want one that's dependable, efficient, and has comfortable leather seats (just kidding). Seriously, though, comfort and shootability is at the top of the list when selecting a weapon you plan to train with regularly. Style and sentiment can simply take a back seat.

2 The point is that although Dirty Harry makes carrying a .44 Magnum hand cannon look practical,

it's simply a poor choice for someone who's looking for a "daily driver" in terms of recoil, speed, and magazine capacity. Rest assured that somewhere between the ear-splitting muzzle blast, massive recoil, and the time it takes to reload a Harry Callahan-style Smith & Wesson Model 29, most shooters will realize they're not going to be putting hundreds of rounds through a revolver each month. It's simply not realistic.



If you're the kind of person who likes to shoot your weapon more than you like to admire its nickel-plated finish, then you're going to want a workhorse and not a show horse. Nor will you want a miniature horse, race horse or a Clydesdale. Just like it is with Goldilocks, it's got to be "just right." A

gun that's built to chew through various qualities of ammunition, is easy to operate, and is exceptionally reliable, is truly the only way to go. Which brings us to our feature presentation: The Best Tactical Sidearms for Shooters.

What Makes a Great Tactical Sidearm?

The class of handgun we're laser sight focused on for this article is the type of weapon you'd carry in a traditional belt holster, in your tactical vest, or in a tactical shoulder holster. Some of these might be sleek enough to serve as a concealed carry weapon, but that's not one of our preferred criteria for this list.

This class most certainly does include military service pistols, the 1911, Beretta M9, and Sig M17 to name a few. These are the pistols that are rugged, reliable, comfortable, and accurate. And while there are a number of "fun sized" compact handguns on the market, the controls are smaller, the felt recoil is greater, and the accuracy is decreased as well.

Yes, there are some very nice sub-compact pistols on the market today; and several of them are even fairly fun to shoot. However, because they tend to lack the shooting comfort and accuracy of their larger brethren, this class of weapon doesn't typically make the cut when it comes to "shooter's sidearms."



The classics still hold up in this category because some things just never change. In fact, the way certain weapons feel and operate makes them stand out from the pack, despite the materials and finish used in their manufacture.

Key criteria for these weapons come down to a simple equation involving reliability, controls/operation, and bang for your buck. What we're looking for is a weapon that's a pleasure to shoot, confidence-inspiring, and makes you generally feel like a badass at the shooting range. And while everyone must inevitably hold and operate a firearm to know how it feels for them, we're here to help you narrow down the field. Let's drill down into some of the criteria we placed the most importance on in our search.

Reliability

This is the most cut and dry criteria we looked at and, spoiler alert, this has become a much different conversation since technology entered what we often call the "Glock Age."

Before the Glock, the typical semiautomatic was a very complicated animal indeed. But Glock changed the game in many ways, the same way John Browning's designs did around the turn of the 20th Century. Nowadays, it can be a challenge to find popular handguns that don't feature many of the designs popularized by Glock.

These striker-fired weapons are lighter in weight and generally function extremely reliably, even without proper maintenance. In fact, we can't remember the last time we had a misfire or failure to feed when shooting a Glock or Glock-inspired weapon. That's not to say they're all the same or equivalent.

The majority of the weapons on this list are among these Glock-inspired polymer guns. However, we've made sure to include some other high performing sidearms you might not expect to see on a list like this. Striker-fired semiautos don't have the market cornered on reliability, and certainly not accuracy or shooting enjoyment, which leads us to...shootability.



Shootability

Shootability is a fun subject to discuss, partly because it's so...well, subjective (hell, it's even a made-up term). Yet, it's also possibly the most important aspect of a weapon that you intend to train with. Every weapon has its own range of applications and limitations. Some designs are intended to stretch that range of applications, while others are intended to be ultra-capable within a certain range of uses.

All of the weapons on this list succeed in living up to their intended performance at the shooting range. They may not be the most lightweight option, nor the most compact. But they deliver a level of shooting performance that exceeds the shooter's ability level.

That is to say, it's highly unlikely that you would ever "outgrow" a model on this list from a skills perspective. They are exceptionally accurate, yet include a complementary mix of features/specs that really allow you to enjoy training with them.

Again, many smaller guns are hard to operate with larger hands/fingers. Lightweight handguns often recoil harder and increase shooter fatigue. A weapon that balances these factors well has a high shootability rating.

Bang for Your Buck

Our view here at NSRA is that paying for top-tier performance is fine, but usually unnecessary to get a top-notch performer. We much prefer getting more than we paid for, which is a feeling you'll likely get if you purchase any of these weapons.

That's not to say we don't appreciate a high-end Les Baer 1911, but you can certainly obtain a high-performing 1911 for well under \$1,000. There's nothing particularly controversial about the concept that a \$3,000 Ed Brown has a sweeter trigger, nicer finish, is of a higher build quality than a lower priced weapon, etc. But how much are those factors actually correlated with shooting performance?

In the end, it's also possible that the more you have invested in a weapon, the more you want to baby

and protect it. Thus, you may get significantly less work out of it.

The point is, if your goal is performance over presentation, or range time over display case time, then these weapons are right up your alley. They represent the highest ratio of performance to money spent, i.e. bang for your buck.

Ruger Security 9



Each of these weapons stands out for being excellent shooter pistols as well as having a truly excellent bang for your buck value. But the Ruger Security 9 is perhaps the best example of that philosophy on this list.

Ruger has really done nice job with this weapon, giving it a very nice grip texture, great ergonomics, and a nice two-stage trigger. This is not a striker fired weapon, as you might expect. The Security 9 uses Ruger's Secure Action technology to deliver a really nice trigger feel that is nice and crisp, but basically indistinguishable from a nice striker pistol.

The 4-inch barrel delivers high-level accuracy, with an overall weight of 24oz. and a 15+1 capacity (which is average, not great, these days). The Security 9 does have a full Picatinny accessory rail, which is good for mounting lasers and lights like our Hellfire. The sights on this pistol have a Glock pattern to them, with a dovetailed front sight, very nice.

This semiauto definitely looks like a Ruger in the blockiness and chunky features, but it is one of the more aggressive looking designs they churned out as well. The Security 9 definitely takes some styling

cues from the SR9 (also a great value handgun), but definitely one-ups its older brother in features.

There are front and rear serrations on the slide for tactical chamber checks. And there's also a little peep window on top of the chamber for added safety. The Security 9 also has a proper safety, but it doesn't interfere with operation should you want to ignore it. We also have to give the designers props for adding serrations on the front of the trigger guard.

Last but definitely not least, this very cutting-edge American-made handgun is also the least expensive on our list. Yes, this weapon can be had for \$300 in most stores, possibly less if you find it on sale.

Retail: \$300

Smith & Wesson M&P40 M2.0



By all counts, the latest 2.0 upgrade on the already tremendously successful polymer handgun series will keep the M&P at the top of lists like this one for a long time to come.

Introduced in 2005, the first generation of the M&P 9mm was an excellent pistol in its own right and at an excellent value. Now in its second generation, Smith & Wesson answered the critics and took this weapon to an elite level.

Since we're already on the topic of 2.0 upgrades, let's discuss what's new. First off, once considered a weak point for the M&P, the new and improved trigger now gets a lot of praise. The break comes a little further back than it does on other pistols, but it's also very crisp. There's an audible reset to this

trigger also. The grip has been improved as well, with a high friction stippling that really keeps this gun glued in place as you fire.

The M&P 2.0 is equipped with an ambidextrous slide controls, reversible mag release, wavy serrations, and a loaded chamber indicator. Another nice touch on the M&P series that it's available in "flat dark earth" brown, if you're into that look.

The .40S&W version has a magazine capacity of 15+1 and comes with 2 very high-quality magazines (color matched if you go with brown). It also comes with 4 interchangeable back straps for fitment.

At the time of this writing, the price difference between the 1st and 2nd generation M&P is roughly \$50, while the value difference feels much wider. That said, there's really no reason to go with the 1st generation. Sights, holsters, and magazines for the 1.0 and 2.0 are interchangeable, FYI.

The M&P40 is a very nice pistol. The M&P40 M2.0 is an elite level pistol with tons of cool features we even get around to mentioning. Priced a bit lower than its Austrian (Glock) and Croatian (XDM) competitors, this American made pistol is an exceptional value.

Retail: \$485

Rock Island 1911 GI Series .45ACP



For those who love the way it feels to pump .45ACP rounds through a 1911, the sky is the limit when it comes to price. The nature of this classic design, since it is produced by so many different manufacturers, is that each 1911 on the market is heavily specialized and surprisingly different. Some

manufacturers focus on customizing every last detail at great expense for the discriminating collector.

Rock Island Armory specializes in delivering surprisingly good value for surprisingly low prices. And while this bargain basement 1911 is not exactly a show stopper with rounded edges and tons of extra checkering that you might get for several times the price, you are getting a quality 1911 that is arguably just as reliable and accurate.

True to form, the no-frills GI Series is a much better representation of the 1911 models actually carried by American soldiers. If the nostalgia of military service trips your trigger, this weapon is certainly in your wheelhouse.

The GI Series features a parkerized finish that is plenty functional in protecting your steel from the elements. The GI-Series comes with a standard six-groove barrel with a 1:16" twist, adjustable trigger, and a few subtle upgrades over the original Colt 1911s of old.

The no-frills sights on this weapon are capable of high-level accuracy. The trigger has some uptake, but we've found it to have a nice break with a noticeable reset. With a thin front blade and black rear sights, it's not a particularly easy handgun to shoot fast. But that's a small thing you might modify with a little white paint.

Still, the GI-Series 1911 is a fantastic value that gives up nothing to get to its very reasonable price. It's a 1911 through and through, and it is perfectly worthy of competition level shooting.

Retail: \$410

GLOCK 17 - Gen 4

If you're in the market for a modern handgun, you absolutely cannot avoid the comparisons with the Glock lineup. Why are these weapons the basis for all comparison? It's because Glock set the bar when it comes to polymer handguns, and quite a high bar at that.

The typical spiel when you talk to someone about these guns goes like this: If you're only going to own 1 firearm, buy a Glock. We don't disagree

really, though we'd readily nominate a slew of other great handguns to the list for the same honorary "1 gun" award.



Either way, the respect for these Austrian made handguns is well earned. The quality, reliability, fit and finish you can expect from a Glock is pretty much second to none.

As you can tell, this isn't the most beautiful showpiece firearm imaginable; and it wasn't designed to be. In fact, the utilitarian look was a point of controversy when the first generation of Glocks started catching on.

But the Glock endured. The Glock 17 is now in its 5th generation, with the G5 coming in about \$125 more than the 4th generation. While there were nominal upgrades to the 5th generation, it's really hard to say that shooters would ever notice the differences in handling or performance over the 4th generation models. The gen 4 has a standard accessory rail (for tactical lights, laser sights, etc.), in addition to finger grooves on the grip.



The Glock 17 comes with 3 double stack magazines, each holding an ample 17 rounds for a 17+1 capacity. The magazine release is on the smaller side and may

take a little getting used to. The 4.5” barrel is great for plinking, target shooting, or tactical shooting, as this platform is nice and steady in the hand.

As for operation and accuracy, most shooters find the 5.5lb trigger pull to be very intuitive. The 4th Gen Glocks have a great reputation for reliability and ease of use. As far as accuracy is concerned, as it is with most Glocks, the only limiting factor is the shooter.

Retail: \$500

Springfield Armory XDM - 9mm



Since its debut in 2002, the XD series has established itself as the leading Glock alternative. In the striker-fired polymer guns department, Springfield’s lineup can be considered #2 with a bullet, racking up comparable rankings for accuracy, reliability and quality.

From our perspective, it’s basically a Chevy vs Ford pickup truck argument. Both are excellent pistols, and it’s best to test drive both before you make a decision one way or the other.

It’s probably fair to say that, “under the hood,” the XD was inspired by Glock, with very similar measurements. The controls on the XD are a little larger than the Glock’s, and the trigger pull is a bit longer. If you like a trigger that you can get your finger on with a decent amount of travel before you fire, the XD might be your cup of tea.

Most XD fans point to the “grip feel” as one of the weapon’s core strengths. With the 3 interchangeable back straps that come standard with the XDM

models, Springfield really capitalizes on that strength. The weight on this weapon is on the lighter side for a service pistol, yet still a few ounces heavier than a comparable Glock model.



The XDM series has a few nice-to-have upgrades over its older brother. For starters, it’s got an ambidextrous magazine release, higher magazine capacity, and serrations on the front of the slide for competition racking.

If firepower is your top priority, you’ll probably like the fact that the 9mm XDM has a 19+1 round capacity. It comes with 2 magazines, a speed loader, holster, and magazine holster as well to sweeten the deal.

Retail \$525

Canik TP9 SA



If you’re looking for a high-performance tactical handgun, one that rivals any of the household names (yeah, we’re looking at you Glock and Springfield XD) at a ridiculously good price, then the Canik TP9 SA should definitely be on your short list.

This weapon has been turning a lot of heads over the past few years, as it's been rapidly making believers out of dyed in the wool skeptics. Some may say that this Turkish-made gun simply can't be equivalent to an Austrian-made weapon, let alone one might right here in the USA. Then they spend some range time with it and change their tune.

This 9mm comes with excellent reliability, an 18+1 capacity, and military contractor grade quality control standards (ISO 9000). That ISO 9000 designation doesn't just affect the initial quality folks, this gun is known for holding up very well in tough conditions. The sights are very nice, the grip provides plenty of friction, and the trigger is excellent. The trigger is crisp, with a great break and short reset.

The original TP9 was a very popular pistol, the main complaint being its trigger was just really stiff. Then came the TP9 SA (for single action) and shut down nearly all negative murmurs regarding the trigger. For a striker fired handgun, the trigger is as good as any. That's high praise, in all honesty.

If you've considered a Walther P99, you might be especially interested in the TP9 SA, since Canik clearly took some design cues from the Walther (the de-cocking mechanism most notably). The fact is that this is a great shooter's gun with an excellent value for your money. The TP9 SA has been in circulation since 2015 and the durability/reliability ratings are high. The price is not.

Retail: \$345

CZ P-09 - 9mm



8 You know us, we like 'em with some quirks and high-capacity magazines. If you're looking for

something a little different, not a Glock, SIG, or XDM, this hammer operated, high-capacity sidearm might fit you just right.

This offering from CZ-USA to the polymer-frame duty pistol category has been turning heads since its release and for good reason. For starters, they really made a splash with a "suppressor ready" version, including a threaded barrel and elevated sights straight out of the box. Oh yeah, and many of those versions also have glow-in-the-dark night sights.

While the suppressor-ready package is an upgrade over the standard P-09, these "suppressor ready" models are available and constitute an excellent bargain when compared to aftermarket barrels and sights. The other heralded feature with the P-09 is a 19+1 round capacity. That's a lot of shooting on one magazine, folks.



The P-09 is not a featherweight gun, weighing in at 32oz and change, roughly the same as some popular SIGs like the P226. Also like the SIGs, it's a really good-looking weapon that really doesn't feel as heavy as it is (not that 2lbs is all that heavy).

As a hammer fired weapon, the P-09 offers hammer fans that beloved single-to-double action. The P-09 has a de-cocking mechanism for those who prefer to skip that long, single-action pull. As you can see, this CZ has a big honking Picatinny rail for accessories.

Given that it's a fairly large, fairly heavy-duty pistol, why not load it up with lights and lasers, right? With the money you save by choosing this gun, you can probably afford some extra goodies.

Retail: \$475

THE BEST SURVIVAL MOVIES OF ALL TIME: PART 2



Survival movies usually feature just a handful of characters who typically find themselves in the worst of situations. Plotlines often involve people battling for their lives with only a few tools and their wits to work with.

However, there are very few motion picture films that offer a realistic take on these man versus nature scenarios. Fortunately, we've come up with ten that represent the best in the genre. From fighting with monstrous grizzly bears to scavenging food during pandemics, characters in survival flicks get our heart rates up as we root for them.

For our list, we judged each show against three criteria to determine which ones made the cut. Movies had to show realistic survival scenarios (even though their premise may not be), had to be enjoyable or educational. Lastly, the characters had to endure genuine hardship and show true grit.

127 HOURS



As we saw in the story featured in *Alive*, survival events don't have to involve widespread doomsday. From people trapped in buildings to the Chilean miners trapped in the 2010 Copiapó mining accident, it's safe to say that an apocalypse can be localized.

The biographical survival drama *127 Hours* is like that, and it is probably the best vehicle that James Franco has ever starred in. Judging by his movies, in an apocalypse situation, Franco's biggest talent seems like it would be in leading you to the biggest, pristine weed farm.

Meanwhile, *127 Hours* is an emotional and remarkable rollercoaster ride. The movie is based on the 2004 memoirs of canyoneer Aaron Ralston's ordeal in the canyons of Utah and depicts the harrowing experience when the adventurer was literally trapped between a rock and a hard place.

His survival experience in the film begins when he is exploring one particular rock face. During that time, he slides into a crevice, and a heavy boulder falls from above on him and settles on his arm. He quickly ascertains that the boulder has pinned his arm to the wall of the crevice, essentially trapping him in place.

Ralston tries to get the attention of two girls who, unfortunately, don't hear him. After he is stuck there for a while, he realizes no help will come. In fact, he didn't inform anyone where he was going.

As he weakens, he starts getting flashbacks of his family, ex-lovers and friends. Through these memories, he finds the strength within to take the desperate actions to free himself from his stony death trap. Since Ralston escaped to pen his memoir, it's safe to say that he made it out alive. Did he make it out in one piece, though? That's, of course, for you to find out by seeing the movie.

Everyone braving claustrophobic dangerous places aren't always as lucky as Aaron Ralston. For instance, 26-year-old John Jones died nearly 28 hours after he was trapped upside-down in Nutty Putty Cave in Utah despite the best rescue efforts.

Some people have to work in caves and mines for a living. Not so for spelunkers and cavers, who often do it for the adrenaline rush. If you are going to seek out a dangerous passion to achieve physical fitness and adventure, it's always a good idea to let dependable people you can rely on know where you are going.

Your chances of survival are better if someone knows when to expect you back and can alert authorities when you don't.

TESTAMENT



“Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds.”
~ The sacred text of the Bhagavad-Gita

Survivalists and preppers should always dish themselves up a serving of realistic nuclear disaster movies every once in a while because they represent the ultimate SHTF scenario.

Testament is a 1983 film based on a short story titled “The Last Testament” by author Carol Amen. The plot involves a suburban town near San Francisco Bay that is only a few miles away from where one of “Oppenheimer's deadly toys” detonates. Society quickly begins to unravel after the attack.

There have been other movies like it, but *Testament* has a realism that is often lost in Hollywood's style of movie-making. In reality, there is not always a happy Hollywood ending, and *Testament* teaches a tragic and valuable lesson about radiation poisoning that many people may not know about, and that is that you don't have to be close to a nuclear detonation for it to wreak heartbreaking damage.

Sadly, when there are high radiation levels, children and infants are the most susceptible because their immature systems are more radiosensitive. The main character Carol Wetherly finds that out the hard way as she outlives her children, watching them die one

by one. The story is so compelling and informational that it is often shown in university classrooms.

If you like your movies with a heavy dose of nuclear disaster non-fiction, then HBO's *Chernobyl* makes for some excellent viewing. *Chernobyl* isn't a film, but rather a miniseries about the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986. The miniseries displays brilliance and realism, even though it has been criticized for glaring inaccuracies, such as those depicted about the Soviet hierarchy.

Chernobyl is not-to-be-missed entertainment, and preppers and survivalists alike will leave it with some great takeaways. Namely, how incompetence, politics, a CYA environment and subterfuge can combine to be a perfect storm with capabilities to destroy the planet.

One thing the movie disturbingly points out is if the scientists hadn't come up with a solution to halt the meltdown, much of the world and everything living in it could have potentially been wiped out.

Another important thing to keep in mind when building more nuclear power facilities or maintaining existing ones is that if humanity is destroyed by one massive reactor meltdown, then other reactors around the world that have no one to operate them will melt down later. If that happens, essentially all life as we know it will be destroyed.

CRAWL



11 *Crawl* has an uncomplicated storyline, but it keeps you glued to your seat when things start to get

interesting. It has its issues, certainly, but this survival flick delivers top-notch drama where it truly counts. You also come out of *Crawl* wondering what you would do to survive if you were trapped and surrounded by rising, creature-infested waters.

The story is about a young woman, played with white-knuckle grittiness by Kaya Scodelario. The plotline has her tending to her divorced father, who is unable to leave during a hurricane evacuation because he's trapped in his home's crawlspace. Soon, they are both fighting to survive as the floodwaters caused by a raging Category 5 hurricane start to inch ever-higher in the house.

If things weren't bad enough for the two, giant alligators manage to find their way into the house through a storm pipe. The events are harrowing, and the father/daughter dynamic keeps you invested.

Scodelario communicates a wealth of emotions as she traverses through several grimy and claustrophobic spaces. The movie is 87 minutes long, and it's entertaining to see how the two fight the elements and try to keep from becoming the gators' next meal.

Crawl has gator-kills a plenty, and the computer-generated imagery, like the grizzly in *The Revenant*, are hyper-realistic. Too often in cinema, cheesy and unrealistic CGI effects can often dull the senses about just how lethal reptiles can be in close quarters (*Anaconda*, anyone?).

However, these giant gators' look and move realistically, even though they behave with a zeal that seems a tad bit unrealistic. After all, many of the gators in the movie just ate a huge meal. It looks like that would slow these big fellas down.

The movie's message is about respecting nature, something that many Floridians and people living in other untamed areas of the world already know. In fact, going out and washing your clothes on a river bank can get you or a family member eaten in no time in some spots of the world.

When watching *Crawl*, it's hard, also, not to think of the horror of the ValuJet crash out of Miami into the Everglades in 1996. The thick muck and

poisonous snakes and alligator-infested waters in the swampland dashed all hope for a rescue. Everyone on board was lost, including San Diego Chargers running back Rodney Culver and his wife.

A similar incident happened in 1993 when 47 people were killed, and 100 people were injured during an Amtrak derailment. The crash was Amtrak's deadliest accident of all time.

Like the ValuJet tragedy, passengers wound up in the swamp, this time in the bayous of Alabama. Unlike ValuJet, there were survivors the swamp didn't claim. Magazines such as the *The Sun* were like a piranha scourge themselves, and they immediately blasted sensational headlines such as, "I don't know if they died in the crash or were eaten by alligators," after quoting survivors.

THE SURVIVALIST



To begin with, we have to like *The Survivalist* simply because of its title. We at NSRA REALLY think it's rad because the protagonist lives by a set of survivalist's principles and skills. The plot revolves around the main character, a man trying to get by in post-apocalyptic times where there is a massive drop in the world's population.

In the story, the survivalist knows how to live efficiently in the wild. He grows and harvests vegetables for food, forages effectively and washes clothes in a nearby stream. He also lays bear traps around his farm's perimeter to catch intruders that mean him harm and want to take his stuff.

Even though the protagonist can be commended for developing mad skills for survival, he also has to develop a different skillset to defend himself against the worst in society. Violence, looting and destruction are commonplace in this world, and the survivalist must put up a brave and effective front against bad people who are devilishly creative and persistent.

The one hour and 44 minute movie poses one main question, and that is if knowing the best way to be self-sufficient and being good at defending yourself is good enough. We know the answer to that question by the time the movie ends.

The plot of *The Survivalist* essentially represents the quote "survival of the fittest" and that core values that go by the wayside in uncivilized times. Some parts in *The Survivalist* are reminiscent of speculative science fiction writer Harlan Ellison's screenplay, *A Boy and His Dog*. Like Ellison's tale, some unconventional and unpleasant sacrifices must be made to keep on living.

As with the other survival films listed here, the story is intense and portrays the extent to which a person will go to survive. The result is a film that is an accomplished creation that is perfectly executed, despite having a shoestring budget to operate with.

CONTAGION



Contagion stars heavy-hitters such as Matt Damon, Laurence Fishburne, Jude Law, Kate Winslet and Gwyneth Paltrow. They all battle the fictional and novel "MEV-1" virus in what compares too closely to the plotline of the movie we are all living today for comfort.

If you caught the movie *Contagion* at the theatres in 2011, you probably thought that it was a mediocre film at best; and certainly not the herald of the prophetic message it represents today. You should try streaming it now to watch it again, or see it for the first time to gain some new perspectives.

The first thing you'll most likely notice when you go to watch it is that you ironically can't see it, or any other movies in theatres, currently. Except maybe for a few drive-ins scattered across the country, theatres are mostly shuttered because of social distancing measures that are an enormous part of reality now.

You'll probably also notice several eerie similarities to COVID-19 as you get absorbed in *Contagion's* plot. One reason that the movie resonates as a connection to a real life pandemic is that Laurie Garrett served as a consultant on the film. Garrett wrote the 1994 book "The Coming Plague," and she has reported on multiple pandemics.

The contagion in the movie, although severe, seems a best-case scenario because the chances are good that an antidote will be developed in the spirit of happy Hollywood themes. We'll all get our antidote now, but when? And what if the virus mutates – what then?

The end of the movie *Outbreak* was like that, and the speed that the magic antidote was developed made the movie unrealistic. What resulted from that cinematic effort was one of the hokiest attempts in film to represent what an airborne, hemorrhagic fever disease would do to the world.

Still, vaccines were quickly developed for one of the most recent Ebola breakouts and for COVID-19, so maybe the movie's romanticized main plotline is not so far-fetched after all. On the other hand while everyone waits to be vaccinated, life most certainly will not be returning to normal for quite some time.

Contagion also has other parallels to COVID-19. For one, it shows how quickly society would collapse in the face of a severe pandemic. Secondly, it grimly demonstrates what a fragile house of cards globalization can be. Of course, globalization is great when it works, but catastrophic when it breaks

The movie also shows other scenes we are witnessing firsthand in 2020. There are events shown such as quarantined neighborhoods, riots and panic buying that parallel what we are seeing today.

Interruptions to the supply chain that stops the delivery of needed food, medicine and other commodities are also fictitiously featured in *Contagion*. Empty grocery aisles are a common sight to consumers today because of how the novel coronavirus waylaid the supply chain. Analysts are also saying it will only get worse.

Many people fearing food shortages are growing large gardens on their property, but see *The Survivor* if you think being self-sufficient is the best and only answer when the grid goes down.

The plotline that revolves around an herbal remedy that supposedly helps the ill stay alive and get better in *Contagion* is also true-to-life. One character, played by Jude Law, touts this remedy on his blog and is arrested for it.

How many times has that happened in 2020 since the pandemic broke out, and are the arrests based on hard evidence or not? Some practitioners of herbal remedies are quacks, but traditional medicine and herbs have been used since the beginning of civilization to cure illnesses and infections.

Truth is definitely stranger than fiction, and the bit in the movie about the herbal remedy represents a true-to-life calling out of the government and big pharma's stranglehold on traditional medicine and botanicals.

That finishes our collection of the ten best survival movies of all time. We hope it gave all of you devoted preppers and survivalists out there plenty of food for thought. Honorable survival film mentions that you'll also want to screen include *Arctic*, *Kon-Tiki*, *Gravity*, *Deliverance*, *The Edge*, *Castaway*, *Adrift*, *I Am Legend*, *The Shallows*, *The Martian*, *John Carpenter's The Thing*, *The Blue Lagoon*, *The Grey*, *Rambo: First Blood*, *Life of Pi* and *All is Lost*



10 Reasons YOU Need A Drone

Government agencies, militaries and corporations use unmanned Aerial Vehicles, more commonly known as UAVs or drones, because they can surveil large areas for a fraction of the price of a traditional aircraft. From giving military planners the ability to identify high-value targets in far off lands to helping traffic planners design more efficient road systems, the unmanned aerial vehicle has become an indispensable tool in recent years.

Drones vs. Conventional Aircraft



Conventional aircraft are expensive to buy and costly to maintain. They also require dedicated places to take off and land and must be operated by trained pilots. Drones, on the other hand, are inexpensive and require little or no maintenance. They can also be operated from anywhere, and the skills needed to fly them can be learned in just a few hours. Drones are also useful tools for the self-reliant, and they are becoming more advanced all the time.

These are just a few the reasons why drones, and their possible uses in a SHTF situation, have become hot topics in the prepper community. What follows are a few amazing ways that drones help the self-reliant.

Perimeter Security

Most preppers see drones primarily as valuable perimeter security tools. UAVs can monitor the avenues of approach to a hideout or camp, and they can even respond to potential threats autonomously if they are tied to motion detectors or other security devices. They can also be programmed to fly

designated patrol patterns and issue alerts when anything unusual is observed.



These abilities could be especially important if the camp or base is in a vulnerable area or can be approached from multiple directions. Drones can also be deployed quickly to investigate unusual noises. Ingenious preppers could turn defense into attack by fitting their drones with weapons or devices capable of deploying smoke, tear gas or mace, but only do this in times of TEOTWAWKI events since it is highly illegal in normal times.

10 Other Uses for Drones

Drones offer preppers far more than a reliable way to monitor the goings on around their properties. They can also be used for reconnaissance, planning and search-and-rescue work. 10 tasks that could be given to drones to complete include:

1. Hunting and foraging: Food scarcity will become an unwelcome part of life in a world without supermarkets and factory farms, which mean preppers will have to pay close attention to the number of calories they burn as they look for new sources of food. Hunters could eliminate hours of painstaking tracking by sending up a drone to look for game, and foragers could use UAVs equipped with cameras to differentiate edible from poisonous plants.

2. Snooping: Knowing what rival bands of preppers are up to could be the difference between life and death in a post-SHTF world. Drones can keep an eye on strangers from hundreds of feet in the air, or they can land near groups of people to listen in on their conversations.



3. Weather forecasts: Drones can be used to assess weather conditions and provide information about the speed and severity of approaching storms. They could also be sent out after a storm has passed to find out if nature's fury has uncovered any new opportunities.



4. Special delivery: Take a page from Amazon's book and use your drone as a special delivery courier. A drone could easily accomplish sending messages, supplies or other small items to team members quickly and covertly.

5. Route planning and searches: Promising paths that stretch for miles only to lead to dead ends may be avoided if drones are used to reconnoiter a route before setting off.



6. Entertainment: Whether it's in the uncertain times of today or when the SHTF, boredom can be an issue. If you are tired of burning out the batteries in your remote looking for things to watch, try using a drone for entertainment value instead. Many of them take breathtaking photos and video, including those from bird's eye views, making for a really cool hobby and conversation piece.

7. Finding Water: One of the most important things you will need to do if society collapses is find water. If this happens to you, using a drone to scout ahead could be a huge energy and time saver, especially if you have limited resources. There are also drones that come with GPS terrain maps that show the roads and main water sources nearby.



8. Search and Rescue: You can use UAVs to quickly find team members and livestock who get lost after straying from the group. Other things you might be able to find through a drone flyover include misplaced tools and machinery.

9. Fishing: Submersible drones have been in existence for less than a decade, and recreational drone enthusiasts and boaters can use them to scout for fishing spots. In some special cases you

could use them to help you repair underwater pipes on your property.

10. Engineering: More technical-minded types can use drones for engineering purposes, and they are already being used in agriculture to facilitate quick and accurate data collection. This feature can help to provide analysis and assessment of soil quality, drainage and crop health on your homestead. It is a much better option than doing the time-consuming (and dangerous in times of TEOWATKI) legwork of manually collecting data and mapping.

Relatedly, certain UAVs can be used for more rapid topographic and planimetric land surveys. Going back to agriculture, they can also be retrofitted to be a less expensive crop duster option than conventional ones.



Drone Types and Features

Drones run the gamut from single rotor devices that can be purchased from a hobby shop for less than \$50, to supersonic reconnaissance UAVs that cost many millions of dollars. The drones used in the private sector are generally classified according to the number of rotors they have. More rotors create a more capable UAV, but adding complexity reduces reliability.

Durability and reliability will be crucial considerations when replacement parts are difficult or impossible to find, which is why preppers may be wise to choose a drone with four rather than six or eight rotors. Once the basic platform has been settled on, preppers can decide what kind of features they would like their drone to have. Popular options include:

- **Camera features:** Cameras are what make drones as useful as they are. Virtually all drones come equipped with cameras that can be upgraded or replaced. Improving the video feed from a drone can be accomplished by using a high-resolution camera or using a gimbal support to improve stability.



- **Night vision:** Many drone cameras have night vision technology that allows them to be used at night. There are also parts available that can provide this capability.

- **Audio:** Fitting microphones or speakers to drones could provide eavesdropping or communications capabilities.

- **Offense:** Militaries and individuals around the world have equipped drones with weapons ranging from handguns to flamethrowers. Again, preppers should be aware that this is a criminal offense in the United States and most other countries.

- **Tech:** Apps are available that allow drones to interact with mobile phones or laptop computers. This software can detect perimeter breaches and deploy a drone to investigate automatically, and it can also be used to send drones on pre-planned patrol routes.

- **Sensors:** If you are planning to conduct low-level reconnaissance, you should consider equipping your drone with a proximity sensor that detects objects in its flight path.

Practical Considerations

Before you rush out to spend your hard-earned cash on the latest UAV craze, you should bear in

mind that many of its most useful features will be seriously compromised if workers are no longer maintaining the power grid or the GPS system. If these systems fail, some of the most advanced UAV features will no longer work and you will have to find a way to get the power you need to keep your drone flying. Keep in mind the following:

- **Power:** Drones run on batteries, which have to be recharged. Solar chargers are available, but they do not work quickly. It can take a day or longer to charge a drone battery using the sun, so you may want to have one or two spare batteries on hand if you do not have a generator or a reliable power source.

- **GPS:** The apps that control drones work on a closed system, which means that they do not need an internet connection. However, the data they use to plan routes and navigate is provided by the GPS satellite network.



- **Regulations:** You can avoid brushes with the law while you are learning how to use your drone by keeping it in sight at all times, not fitting it with any weapons and avoiding the controlled airspace around airports and government facilities.

Other Drone Tips



Before you buy, here are a few other important things to bear in mind when regarding drone ownership.

- If you are just starting out, buy a drone that's designed for beginners. That way, you can lessen risk and save money until you move up to bigger and better things.
- Everything has its limitations, including your UAV. They can be especially hard to maintain and operate if there's a lot of rain and heavy winds.
- Modern drone designs can easily fit into your pocket or backpack.
- Adding a drone to your repertoire of self-reliance could be a wise choice, but you should choose it carefully. Make your selection based on ruggedness and ease of maintenance rather than fancy whistles and bells that may not work in emergency situations.
- Lastly, learn how to operate your drone long before your neighborhood is filled with people who take pot shots at anything that looks suspicious.



Final Thoughts



We listed a few ideas on how drones could be put to use when you are self-reliant. However, we're positive there are many other innovative ways to use drones in cases of emergency, for survival and homesteading, or just for some old fashioned fun. As we mentioned previously, technology is improving on drones all the time. It will be interesting to see what the future holds for these handy little gadgets.





HOW TO INSTALL YOUR NEW TACTICAL LASER SIGHT

Laser sights are proven to be effective when it comes to defensive shooting scenarios, but they're also highly effective training tools at the target range, tactical course, and even in your dry fire training. The projection of a laser onto a target can show us just how smooth and effective our draw and hold truly is (or isn't). A moving laser on your target means an unsteady firearm in your hand.

Military and SWAT operators have benefited greatly from using these technologically advanced sights. But until recently, these devices were largely reserved for those professionals whose gear is purchased by the taxpayer. That's because weapon-mounted lasers once carried a cost of hundreds of dollars.

Now, thanks to advances in manufacturing these prices have fallen dramatically, putting this powerful tactical technology in the hands of the everyman. In fact, our partners at MyCrisisGear offer a fine laser sighting system for under \$25 (mycrisisgear.com/laser). So why not snatch one up?

Once their package arrives at your doorstep, however, you may find yourself at a bit of a loss, as most handgun owners don't mount accessories on their weapons. Not to worry, we've got a set of step-by-step instructions to guide you through properly mounting your first laser sight.

INSTRUCTIONS:

For demonstration, we're going to describe the process for installing the MCG Tactical Laser Sight onto a Springfield XD, but the process is the same for most modern handguns, including Glock's, M&P's, Berettas, etc.



STEP ONE: First things first, make sure your firearm is in completely safe and unloaded condition before you begin. Next, identify the placement of your gun's rail system.

STEP TWO: Remove the MCG Tactical Laser Sight from the packaging and locate the 3 batteries (included), along with the 3 hex keys (also included).

STEP THREE: Using the larger hex wrench, open the compartment labeled "Battery" and install all three batteries, positive side facing up. You may want to use your hex wrench to gently push the first battery to the bottom of the compartment.



STEP FOUR: Re-install the battery cap and engage the sight's power switch to confirm that the red laser is indeed shining. If not, you'll want to double check that you've installed all 3 batteries correctly.



STEP FIVE: Use the large hex key to loosen the sight's mounting cross-bolt. Hold it up to your weapon's rail to eyeball the width until the sight's mounting brackets will easily slide over both sides of your gun's accessory rail. The bracket is hinged to allow for fitment.

STEP SIX: Seat your tactical laser onto the rail system and determine exactly where your sight feels most comfortable. Use the large hex wrench to tighten the mounting bracket. Double check to ensure that there is no movement or wobble, as this sight will need to withstand your firearm's recoil. We recommend using blue thread-locker on the mounting bolt to make sure your sight stays tight for thousands of rounds.



STEP SEVEN: Pick a wall in your garage or home and stand 10 feet away. Turn your laser sight on and hold your firearm (in this case, a handgun) in your normal shooting stance. Note where the laser dot appears on the wall in reference to your open sights.

STEP EIGHT: Make adjustments to the elevation and windage screws using your smallest hex wrench. Your goal is to adjust the laser until the dot appears directly at your gun's point of aim.



A fairly close zero can be achieved without a trip to the range, however fine tuning may be necessary when you actually begin shooting with your new laser sight. Dry fire practice with your new sight is an ideal way to adjust to your weapons new "furniture." Now get out to the range and punishing some bullseyes!

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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