



MEMBERS UPDATE

May 2021

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Best Generators for Blackouts

There's no way around it: Electricity has become an absolute necessity when it comes to our way of life. Whether it's communications, finances, or climate control in your home, a failing power source will leave you out in the cold, sometimes literally. That's why you need a functional backup plan before it's too late.



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Stopping Power Myth

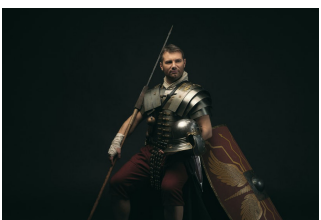
We've all heard the term "stopping power," but nobody seems to know how to measure it. Is there any hard data to back up the importance some advocates place on it? In this article, we'll examine both the folklore and the science behind this commonly misunderstood firearms concept.



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Best Security Cameras

In last month's NSRA, we explained how to best utilize these extremely common security devices to actually detect and hopefully deter criminals. Now it's time for the fun part, shopping for which camera systems are the most effective for your home or business' security needs.



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Do You Need Body Armor?

Body armor isn't just for medieval museums and SWAT team members anymore. With the prices of wearable protection falling, at the same time comfort and styling are making major gains, more and more Americans have decided body armor is a worthy investment. Here's what to look for.



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Raysonho, Wikimedia Commons*

10 OF THE BEST GENERATORS FOR BLACKOUTS

The Energy Information Administration says that the average American home loses power once or twice a year for about three hours, but averages rarely paint a complete picture. People who live in parts of the country where there are extreme weather conditions will lose power more often, which often means they are left without electricity for days or even weeks.

THE TEXAS CASE STUDY

If there ever was a case to be argued for having a generator, it's in Texas. To explain, in February, the state was hard-hit by bone-chilling cold and widespread power outages that blanketed parts of the U.S. The cold air mass contributed to 70 deaths, with half of them occurring in Texas.

Even animals didn't escape the suffering caused by the once-in-a-generation storm. For instance, thousands of sea turtles experienced cold shock and monkeys, lemurs and one chimpanzee died at San Antonio animal sanctuary Primarily Primates.

2 The record-breaking temperatures also caused pipes to freeze up and burst. The event exposed

weaknesses in how the state's electric companies handle massive power outages. It is widely reported that they were woefully unprepared, especially in the cases of their customers across North Texas who received unbelievably high power bills.

In one case that has received national attention, a customer that was unable to switch his provider was stuck with a whopping \$17,000 electric bill! The whole debacle has left people scratching their heads and wondering how the disaster could happen and how a bill like that is even legal.

One thing that did happen during the disaster was that the prices of power bills spiked after wholesale energy prices skyrocketed while the power plants were offline. Understanding that everyone is up in arms about the whole thing, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott met Saturday with legislators from both parties Feb. 20 to discuss surging energy prices. Abbott said in a statement, "We have a responsibility to protect Texans from spikes in their energy bills resulting from the weather."

INVESTIGATION OF ERCOT

Governor Abbot also made this announcement on Twitter, “We are ordering an investigation into ERCOT (the Electric Reliability Council of Texas) and immediate transparency by ERCOT.”

It is probably a smart move for the Texas governor because fallout over energy prices has led to recalls in the past. If you will “recall,” the California electricity crisis of the early 2000s was a large part of what led to Democratic Governor Gray Davis being replaced with Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger in the Special 2003 California Gubernatorial Election. Other factors leading to Governor Gray’s recall included his preventing Proposition 187 and his signing of highly restrictive gun-control legislation.

Ed Hirs, an energy fellow at the University of Houston made a statement that sort of defends ERCOT. Hirs said that issue was due to “a lack of weatherized power plants and a statewide energy market that doesn’t incentivize companies to generate electricity when demand is low.” Normally, the winter is mild in the state, and the demand for electricity peaks when the mercury in the state’s thermometers skyrocket in response the sweltering heat of its summers.

He rejected the fact that the storm went beyond what ERCOT could have anticipated.

All of this leads to the incentive for having a generator backup and other alternatives to your home’s traditional electrical system. Falling back on an alternative like that can provide much-needed power during a blackout, while also keeping you warm and safe. Additionally, keeping your home heated is an important component in keeping your pipes from freezing.

HOW TO FIND THE BEST HOME GENERATOR

A home generator is a reliable first line of defense against power outages, but finding the right unit

can be challenging, as the choices range from small portable units that can power one or two appliances to standby models capable of powering an entire home.

WATTAGE IS THE KEY

Generators are ranked by how much power they can create. So, the first thing you should do before comparing models is figure out how much wattage you need. Wattage can be tricky because the amount of power that a device or appliance uses when it is running is lower than its startup or peak wattage.

Generally speaking, startup wattage is about three times running wattage. The amount of power household devices and appliances use varies widely, so it is a good idea to decide ahead of time what you plan to keep running and what you can live without.

You should check your appliances to see how much power they draw, but the following wattage list may give you some idea about the kind of generator you need:

- Table lamp: 150 watts.
- TV set: 200-350 watts.
- Refrigerator: 600-1,200 watts.
- Freezer: 500-1,200 watts.
- Computer: 500-1,500 watts.
- Radiant heater; 1,300 watts.
- Electric range: 2,500 watts.
- Water heater: 3,000-4,500 watts.
- Window air conditioner: 900-1,500 watts.
- Central air conditioner: 2,500-4,000 watts.
- Electric furnace: Up to 20,000 watts.

HOW MUCH TOTAL POWER IS NEEDED?

After seeing how much power your devices draw, it’s a good idea to have a ballpark figure of the total generator power you’ll need to power them in your

home. Here's are some rough estimates to figure in before you go shopping:

- 1,000 watts = You can recharge batteries and portable digital gadgets and hook up some lights.
- 3,000 watts = You can provide power to several household lights and 1-2 appliances.
- 9,000 watts = You will have enough power to run the average family residence.

PORTABLE, INVERTER AND STANDBY GENERATORS

When you start looking at generators, you will quickly realize that there are three basic types available. Portable generators provide a quick and simple way to power up a few appliances. Inverter generators are more efficient and can convert AC current into DC current, and standby generators can switch on automatically when the electricity supply is interrupted and power an entire home.

PORTABLE GENERATORS



This is the simplest and cheapest way to safeguard against power outages, but the amount of electricity they provide is better suited to tailgating and camping than weathering out a storm.

4 While some portable generators can produce enough power to handle the demands of a

suburban home, they are noisy. Although some of them are diesel, propane or solar powered, most of them need a lot of gasoline to keep running. Portable generators can be connected to a home's power supply, but installing a transfer switch could be almost as expensive as the unit.



This is why most people who use portable generators simply plug devices or appliances into them. Generators that run on diesel or gasoline should be kept outside and at least 10 feet from the house as they produce odorless and potentially lethal carbon monoxide.

INVERTER GENERATORS



Inverter generators provide more power than most portable units. They are usually connected to

breaker boxes so they can run hardwired devices like sump pumps. They also are a good choice for sensitive electronic components as they provide a very steady power supply.

Inverter generators offer some of the benefits of standby models, but they still run on gasoline or diesel fuel just like a portable. This is something you should consider if you are worried about a long power outage, as gas stations often run out of fuel in these situations.

STANDBY GENERATORS



Standby generators are generally more expensive than other options, but they offer two key benefits. Firstly, they run on natural gas or propane, which means they can be connected directly to a home's fuel supply. The second advantage is their simplicity.

Standby generators are permanently installed like a central air conditioning system, and they usually switch on automatically when regular power service is interrupted. Standby generators can power an entire home for long periods, but the cost of installing and connecting them can run into the thousands.

STORAGE TIME IS DIFFERENT BETWEEN FUEL TYPES

Generators can use several types of fuel, and some are even solar charged. Be mindful that gasoline and diesel can degrade quickly, though. Meanwhile, if you store propane properly, it will hold up for years. In brief, don't think you can put a can of gas in

storage and take it out a decade later when the SHTF. It's a good thing to consider when you are deciding on which generator type to buy.

10 OF THE BEST GENERATORS FOR BLACKOUTS

Once you have calculated how much power you will need and figured out what type of generator best fits your needs, you can start to compare features and prices. Here are 10 of the best generators currently available listed according to the amount of power they provide:

1. WEN 56310i: The WEN 56310i provides 2,800 running watts, 3,100 surge watts and can run for almost eight hours at half load. It has a 1.85-gallon fuel capacity and weighs in at a little over 80 pounds.

The unit features two three-pronged receptacles, one 120-volt NEMA twist lock receptacle, a 12V DC receptacle and two USB ports. You can even buy a parallel connection kit to run two WEN 56310i units together. Expect to pay a little over \$800 for one of these units.

2. Westinghouse WGen5500: The Westinghouse WGen5500 puts out an impressive 5500 running watts and can cope with 6875 starting watts. It has a 6.6-gallon fuel tank that can provide power for up to 15 hours, but it weighs a hefty 170 pounds. Its four household outlets and single L14-30R outlet are protected by covers, and they can power up just about any appliance in your home.



The Westinghouse WGen5500 is also set up to accept a transfer switch, so it can be turned into an automatic home backup system. These units can be picked up from big-box home improvement stores for under \$700.

3. Briggs & Stratton Q6500: Part of the Briggs & Stratton QuietPower range of units, the Q6500 packs a lot of punch into its modest dimensions. The unit weighs only 128 pounds, but it cranks out 5,000 running watts and 6,500 surge watts. It generates only 66 dBA of noise and can run for up to 14 hours at a quarter load, and it has a circuit breaker to prevent overheating. The Q6500 has four household outlets, one locking outlet and two USB ports, and it cost about \$1,000.

4. Duromax XP10000E: If you are looking for a generator that can provide reliable backup power and be taken on camping or RV trips, the Duromax XP10000E could be the perfect choice. Its 493 cc engine runs at a constant 8,000 watts and can provide up to 10,000 peak watts. It is easy to move around thanks to its collapsible handles and inflatable tires.

The XP10000E's receptacles feature MX2 technology, which means that the generator can run at 120 volts and 240 volts at the same time. Filling the unit's 8.3-gallon tank provides enough fuel for about 10 hours of use at half power, but its 249-pound bulk makes it a bit of a heavyweight. The Duromax XP10000E can be purchased online or at retail stores for about \$1,000.

5. Duromax XP12000EH: The XP12000EH provides only a little more power than the XP10000E, but it is not power that earns it a place on this list. The XP12000EH is a dual fuel generator, which means that it can run on either gasoline or propane for up to 30 hours. This added convenience does come at a price as the XP12000EH costs about \$300 more than the XP10000E.

6. Briggs & Stratton 20kW1 Standby Generator: If you are interested in a standby generator, the Briggs & Stratton website could be a good place to start your search. The company's 40395 model can be installed indoors or outside, and its 20,000-

watt power output is capable of powering a 12,000 square-foot home with a central air conditioning system. The 20kW1 Standby Generator features a 16-circuit automatic transfer switch, and it can be purchased for about \$4,300.

7. Generac 7043: The Generac 7043 ups the ante with 22,000 watts of power and a 200-amp transfer switch. The air-cooled unit also offers Wi-Fi connectivity that allows you to check on it from anywhere in the world using an internet connection. It also runs at a quiet 67 dBA. The 7043 delivers its power with very little harmonic distortion, which makes it ideal for electronics as well as appliances. Expect to pay about \$5,250.

8. Generac Protector 25kW: Generac's Protector 25kW lives up to its name with liquid cooling, a coolant recovery system and natural gas or propane fuel options. These units are designed for easy installation to as close as 18 inches from the buildings they serve, but prices start at \$9,000.

9. Honda 2200W Super Quiet Inverter Generator: Propane and gas-powered portable generators can keep the essential parts of your home running when grid power goes down, and modern models have become inexpensive and efficient enough to make sense for many homeowners.

A generator's engine size directly correlates to how much juice it can generate, and if your energy needs for one are on a smaller scale, say for powering RV applications, you may want to get the Honda 2200W portable inverter generator. Of course, it doesn't do as much as monument-style house generators, but it is a lot cheaper and an ideal solution for powering your TV, DVD, satellite, coffee pot and your freezer (saving all that hard-earned deer jerky for you).

Portable generators are often loud, but the one in the Honda 2200W features a super quiet noise level. You can pick one up at a home improvement or hardware store for a little over \$1,000.

10. EcoFlow DELTA Power Station: This portable generator is at a comparable cost to and operates similar to the Honda 2200. The device's large inverter load enables it to power heavy-duty DIY tools and most home appliances under 1800Watt

(3300Watt Surge, Pure Sine Wave) with 1260 watt-hour capacity. The feature allows you to provide power to about 13 devices simultaneously. The main difference between the two is that the EcoFlow DELTA can be fully recharged by solar panels in about 4 hours and fully or through a 12/24V car port in less than 10 hours. You can order the green generator from EcoFlow's website for about \$1,300.

SAFETY FIRST



Photo Credit: Andre Gaines, Unsplash

Generators can keep the lights on and your appliances running when grid power is interrupted, but they can also be dangerous. Touching a generator with wet hands or leaving it running in the rain can lead to electrocution, and refilling the fuel tank before allowing a hot unit to cool down can start a fire or cause contact burns.

You should hire a qualified electrician if you plan to connect your generator to your home's power supply, and never plug your generator into a wall outlet. This is known as "backfeeding," and it is extremely dangerous. Also, completely read the operator's manual, before turning it on and using it for the first time.

THE SILENT BUT DEADLY KILLER

Generators can provide a lifesaving power source in emergency circumstances, especially for those who rely on electricity-powered medical devices. That being said, they can also pose extremely serious health risks in the way of carbon monoxide, which can be a silent but deadly killer.

If you ever catch the news after a big winter storm, you've probably noticed there are usually a rash of carbon monoxide poisonings. Most of the time, portable generators are the primary culprit, as a malfunctioning unit can emit as much CO as approximately 450 automobiles do. When certain levels are reached, just five minutes of exposure to the colorless, odorless gas is fatal.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, nearly a 1,000 people died from lethal levels carbon monoxide emitted by portable generators between 2005 and 2017. Besides carbon monoxide poisoning, portable generators can also cause the electrocutions, fires and contact burns described above.

If you don't want to become one of these grim statistics, there are three things the CDC recommends you do. First, install battery-operated or battery back-up CO detectors close to every sleeping area in your home and inspect them regularly.

Second, never, ever use a generator of any type inside your home, including the garage (even if your windows and doors are open). Third, only use generators outdoors and at not under a distance of 20 feet from your home, doors and windows.

THE WRAP UP

Unfortunately, Texas got a taste of what it could be like if the grid goes down, and it wasn't pretty. In fact, the event was dangerous and costly for many of the residents of the Lone Star State. If you want to stay safe and healthy without outside assistance, whether you are in Texas or anywhere else, the NSRA believes you should learn more about becoming self-sustaining. This independent way of living can help you thrive and survive when the SHTF.

In the spirit of self-sufficiency and survivalism, the NSRA features emergency preparedness and prepping checklists for our readers, so be sure to check out our new and existing articles and newsletters that give you tips and show you how to start prepping. You'll be glad you did!



The Great Handgun “Stopping Power” Myth

If you're a longtime handgun enthusiast, you've no doubt heard the term "stopping power" bandied about more than a time or two. Chances are, you've even heard these words passing through your own lips and possibly wondered how or when you came to have an opinion about this topic.

If so, then you're in luck. Because in this article, we're going to plumb the depths of this concept that's so frequently argued over and misunderstood. Let's see if this rings true for you: You're listening to some boneheads arguing over what handgun round is the best and one of them says, "9mm, why...that doesn't have nearly enough stopping power."

And the guy who likes the 9mm in this debate retorts with something like, "Well if you hit me with a .22LR, I'd just about die from the fright alone." Then everybody chuckles a little and decides that what they're listening to is one heck of an unproductive discussion.

The interesting piece of this topic is that everyone seems to have an opinion, although next to nobody

has any firsthand experience, nor have they done any research on the topic of "stopping power," aside from perhaps shooting a feral hog on the move. Perhaps it kept running, or perhaps the hog stopped in its tracks. That's enough for most of us to form an opinion, sure -- but not a reliable one.

What is Stopping Power?



The term is fairly common at shooting ranges, hunting camps, and among law enforcement professionals. But the truth is that it's about as scientific as "highway miles" are when used in a pre-owned car advertisement.

What is scientific, however, is the formula for kinetic energy:

$$KE = \frac{1}{2}mv^2$$

In short, what this formula tells us is that IF you knew you were going to a gunfight, you would most certainly not choose to bring a handgun. That's because kinetic energy will increase as the mass of a projectile increases **and exponentially as velocity increases.**

Thus, a long gun is preferable over a handgun, hands-down, because the can fire a projectile at 3X the velocity of a handgun. This is why soldiers carry long guns on the battlefield. Now, these soldiers also commonly carry a sidearm for the exact same reason that you might – they are compact. As a backup, a handgun fills an important function in a battle setting.

Notice, however, the old stopping power argument is pretty toothless when the comparison is made with rifles or carbines. The fact is that these weapons fire bullets at much greater velocities; the kinetic energy increases exponentially.

The fact of the matter is, we don't carry handguns because they're particularly effective. We carry them because they're substantially easier to carry, conceal, etc. Relatively speaking, handguns don't offer the best accuracy, highest magazine capacities, or "stopping power." That's why proper training is so critical when it comes to these weapons.

The FBI Standard



Now that we've established that physics is on the side of greater velocities, a category in which handguns don't compare well to long guns, let's discuss what physics tells us about handgun calibers

and their effective kinetic energies. More specifically, let's dive into what physics the scientists at the FBI use to determine ammunition effectiveness.

The gold standard of what ammunition is deemed to be "effective" for use in a law enforcement or defensive scenario is the FBI's testing protocol. In this testing scenario, the ammo is put through 6 simulations. The first is firing it into a 10% ballistic gel, meant to simulate human flesh. It has to penetrate between 12 to 18 inches to pass this portion, which pretty much any of the popular handgun calibers (9mm, .357 Mag, .40 S&W, .45 ACP) can do with ease.

The remaining tests consist of firing through heavy clothing, steel, wallboard (drywall), plywood and auto glass. According to Robert Jordan of Tactical-Life.com, the specifics of the test are as follows:

"A cotton T-shirt, cotton shirt, a layer of fleece and a layer of denim simulate heavy clothing. The steel test utilizes two pieces of 20-gauge steel set 3 inches apart. This simulates shooting through a car door. The wallboard test requires two pieces of half-inch gypsum (aka drywall) set 3.5 inches apart. This simulates shooting through most interior walls. The plywood test uses a 0.75-inch-thick board to simulate shooting through a wooden door. Finally, the auto glass is 0.25-inch laminated safety glass set at an angle of 45 degrees to the floor and 15 degrees to the side. This simulates standing at the left-front quarter panel and shooting into a car at the driver of the vehicle."

Perhaps you guessed which one of these simulations poses the biggest challenge for most rounds, be they .45 ACP or 9mm. The auto glass penetration test is the trouble spot for most ammunition. Long story short, there is no perfect caliber or ammunition; it's just that simple.

Hollow-point ammunition is designed to expand and create a larger permanent wound cavity. These are effective at increasing expansion and damage, but shouldn't be depended on to expand sufficiently enough to incapacitate an attacker. The fact is, expanding rounds often don't penetrate as effectively when met with an obstruction.

One thing that becomes clear when you delve into this data is how much variance there is between



different bullet specs, manufacturers, and designs. In essence, you begin to realize that .45 ACP identifies the parameters of your weapon better than it does the ballistic performance.

For example, is this a 125-grain .45ACP bullet or a 230-grain round? Is it a full metal jacket or self-defense round designed to fragment? Even the muzzle velocity for .45 ACP ammunition ranges from 830fps to 1200fps.

Here's a sampling of the data when it comes to popular handgun calibers (Jacketed Hollow Point ammo was used):

Caliber	Muzzle Velocity	Kinetic Energy	Gel Penetration	FBI 1-shot stop
9mm	1321fps	454 ft/lbs	14.2"	91%
.357Mag	1442fps	580 ft/lbs	13.3"	96%
.40S&W	1150fps	485 ft/lbs	12"	94%
10mm	1055fps	445 ft/lbs	15.5"	82%
.45 ACP	1001fps	411 ft/lbs	9.4"	88%

In the end, the FBI's protocol creates an objective standard for ammunition to meet, which has resulted in much better performing and consistent ammunition. Still, the number of dynamic factors always points back to 2 overarching maxims.

The 2 Maxims of Defensive Firearms

The first maxim is often mentioned, but given short shrift in our opinion. To keep it short and simple, we'll call this the law of unpredictability. This phenomenon is often referred to as the "fog of war," i.e. the uncertainty factor that's inevitably present in a rapidly developing situation.



Things rarely go according to plan in the heat of the moment. As many hunters can attest, a little adrenaline can make for some very perplexing outcomes. Now imagine that amplified a hundred-fold.

The FBI's ballistic gel test was designed to measure the penetration depth and expansion of a bullet, which it does effectively (in a highly controlled environment). This test has been highly criticized over time because it doesn't take into account inconsistent densities that are in the human body, such as bones.

And then there are also numerous examples of "magic bullets" and unbelievable ricochets. The point is that "stopping power" is far from an exact science. There are simply too many complicating situational variables to consider; this is in addition to the caliber, bullet design, and weight.

We've all heard the stories of assailants continuing to attack after taking direct hits with large caliber weapons. The presence of strong narcotics and other intoxicants can change the entire game entirely.

Simulations can improve, of course, but the fact is that the number of variables to control in a life or death conflict is beyond comprehension, particularly for the human that is going through the conflict in real time. Fluid situations are complex and very touch and go. In fact, a quote popular among Navy SEALs goes like this, "We don't rise to the level of our expectations, we fall to the level of our training," which brings us to the second maximum of defensive firearms.



The second maxim of defensive firearms is that training is everything. It doesn't matter what round you have chambered if you miss the target entirely. It doesn't matter what the muzzle velocity is if your "holster velocity" isn't fast enough.

Shot placement will be more decisive and determine more outcomes than the concept of "stopping power." As we mentioned earlier, a .22LR is far from the ideal round for self-defense, but with the right shot placement this round has won many conflicts.

To make the point from a different perspective, a handgun is at a serious disadvantage when met with a carbine or rifle in several key areas. Still, with the proper training an operator who is outgunned can still prevail.

For most of us, training begins and ends with accuracy. And, of course, shot placement is critical, but that's quite a different concept than simply shooting a bullseye. Instructors will often refer to aiming for "center mass" when it comes to self-defense targets, while others will put a finer point on it. For example, aim for the third button down on the target's polo shirt.

There's really no nice way to talk about it; if you are trying to stop an attacker, then your goal is to damage at least one vital system to the point where that attacker is incapacitated. That could be a drop in blood pressure, damage to the skeletal system, damage to the nervous system, etc.

The concept of "aim small, miss small" is best applied when targeting center mass, e.g. that third button. If you hit the sternum, you created catastrophic damage, if you miss by 3 inches, you're still hitting the lungs. A miss by 4-inches and you

may strike the heart. Grizzly as that illustration may be, it's easy to see how applying this concept to your handgun training gives you a decisive edge.

That's why we do recommend the third button concept for defensive handguns. At the speed of a real world, fluid confrontation, simply aiming at center mass is not sufficient in our view. Even with a 17-round magazine, loaded with the best performing ammo according to the FBI, it's still very possible to miss with all 17 rounds. This happens to under equipped law enforcement officers routinely.

In addition to shot placement, there are many other coordinated movements that you must master such as effectively drawing your weapon and bringing your weapon into shooting position efficiently. If you don't possess these skills, then shot placement AND stopping power are totally irrelevant.

The Truth About Stopping Power



As you can see, it is possible to compare different calibers and different ammunition on a reasonably objective scale. And, yes, some calibers tend to have a wider sweet spot than others when it comes to this form of testing.

The truth is, however, there are many different routes to score well in the FBI's ammunition testing. The muzzle velocity, bullet weight, and characteristics of any given ammo can do an awful lot to level the playing field, so to speak.

The truth about stopping power is that it's only a very small factor in a much more dynamic equation. The much greater advantage in a conflict between two adversaries carrying handguns is training, skill level, and magazine capacity.



14 BEST Security Cameras/Systems

In last month's piece about security cameras, we took a look at the different styles to help you determine what type is best for you. Now that you know what type of camera to look for, let's go a step further by exploring the best cameras/systems. We will include cameras from both types, so make sure you choose carefully.

Best Wireless Cameras

These cameras allow you to stream their video feed from your phone when you're not at home. Although some of them have wired and wireless options, the majority of them will stop working if there's a power outage.

Wyze Cam

The Wyze Cam is both efficient and inexpensive, which makes it a big hit. It comes with night vision, motion alerts, HD live streaming, and a 14-day backup for video in the cloud. Even better, this camera also includes a microSD slot. In other

12 words, you can use the Wyze Cam as a wireless or

wired resource. If you choose to, you can also have this camera sync to Google Assistant or Alexa. The best part is that you get all of this in a camera that costs less than \$26.

Arlo Pro 3



There are many variations on the Arlo Pro 3 package. To get a simple one-camera setup, simply turn to Amazon where you'll need less than \$200. From there, you can go all the way up to six-camera system (but it'll cost you around \$955). Whether you choose a one, two, three, etc. camera package, the 160-degree angle lens will give you a broad view of the area. And as a designated outdoor camera, the Arlo Pro 3 is able to withstand blistering heat and frigid cold temperature.

You'll get color night vision with this system, which is a big plus. The battery will also last for six months between charges, so there's no need to constantly be pulling the camera inside. The camera has two-way audio, and you can even take the system to the next level with optional Arlo Smart software.

Arlo Video Doorbell

Yes, we've chosen a second Arlo camera for this list, and that should really tell you something. This time around we're looking at a video doorbell, which will capture people coming and going from your front door. We love that this particular doorbell camera doesn't require a hub. Instead, you simply hook it up directly to your Wi-Fi.

As with the last Arlo product, this one only needs to be charged twice a year. It also comes with the 180-degree view that Arlo is known for, and this camera can be converted into a wired option, if you prefer. Combine all of that with a two-way speaker, and you've got a very impressive doorbell camera. Right now, it retails for just under \$200 on Amazon.

Logitech Circle 2 Wireless Camera



This security camera comes with a 180-degree view in 1080p, day or night. And at night, it can see for up to 15 feet, giving you a wide range. The rechargeable battery

will last about 30 days in your front yard but can last for up to 90 days in a lower activity area.

you time, you can choose to watch only a 30-second time-lapse video that condenses the major events of the day. You also have the opportunity to pay for more than 24 hours of cloud storage.

All in all, this is a pretty handy camera. It has many useful features, and its retail price is only \$170. As a bonus, you can hook it up to Alexa, if you choose.

Nest Cam Indoor

Unlike the other cameras on this list, the Nest Cam Indoor cannot be placed outside. However, what it lacks in portability, it makes up for in features. You can set this camera to record a room for security, or you can put it in your window to record everything happening outside.

It has HD live streaming and motion alerts. Additionally, for only \$5 per month, you can add on person alerts. Yes, this means the Nest Cam will learn how to recognize your closest family and friends, and it will alert you when they come over.

As a Nest Cam, this security camera responds to Google Assistant. It also responds to Alexa, though, which means anyone can use it.

Blink Outdoor Camera



Instead of offering the ability to charge the camera, Blink decided instead to provide two AA lithium batteries. Yes, you'll have to change them when they die, but these bad boys are going to last for about two years first.

The camera itself offers day and infrared nighttime vision. The device is also built to withstand the most grueling temperatures, so you can leave it outside during a summer heatwave or a winter snowstorm.

You can see, hear, and speak to visitors with this model's two-way audio features. Additionally, you won't need any help setting this camera up because it's super easy! It's possible to save everything in the cloud too, as long as you sign up for one of the optional programs.

13 One of the best features of the Logitech Circle 2 is that it comes with free 24-hour storage. To save

You can get anywhere from one camera (\$99.99) to five cameras (\$379.99). Even better, you can pay for it over a 5-month time period on Amazon. This means that you only have to make the first payment to receive your camera (or cameras), and you can pay it off in four additional monthly payments.

SimpliSafe Wireless Home Security System

Perhaps you've seen SimpliSafe's catchy ads with Robbert Larson? Poor old Robbert has to wear a mask all the time, even in family photos. This doesn't prevent him from wanting to keep his family safe, though. And you'll be able to do the same thing with the SimpliSafe Home Security System.

Designed to be a step ahead of a simple camera, this system comes with backups for your backups. It works via Wi-Fi, but it also uses a cellular connection, just in case. And, in case that fails somehow, it also has a 24-hour backup battery. Either way you slice it, this system is going to protect your home.

The system comes with a keyfob to allow you to disarm and alarm it on the go. You can also expand the system's reach with an optional add-on of up to 100 additional sensors. If you want professional monitoring, you can add that on for about \$15 per month.

So, how much does all of this cost? Surprisingly, a five-piece system is less than \$200. You can upgrade all the way to a 12-piece system for only \$399. To make it even easier, Amazon allows you to pay for the system in five monthly payments.

Best Wired Cameras

Are you worried about losing access to your videos? Do you want to ensure that the system has a built-in drive that you can use at any time without having to pay for a cloud storage? If so, a wired camera system is your best option.

ANNKE 5MP Security Camera

ANNKE's 5-in-1 camera system makes it easy to protect your home. And, as an added bonus, you can also use your Wi-Fi network if you'd like to watch live videos when you're not at home. Where

this system works best, though, is by allowing it to feed its video feed to the wired connection. There will be no buffering or loss of resolution when you choose this option.



You can mark out specific zones to reduce the number of false alarms. It's also possible to place cameras inside and outside your home due to their rugged build. The night vision feature captures footage for up to 100-feet. With multi-level encryptions, video transfers and/or downloads are practically hack-free.

What happens if there's someone trying to break into your home? The system pushes photos to your phone instantly. And what if the home Wi-Fi goes down? That's not a problem for this wired system. You receive all of this for less than \$250, which makes it a very good deal.

Hiseeu Wired Security Camera System



The Hiseeu system comes with four cameras (and you may attach up to four more). The casing of each camera is rated down to 5 degrees and up to 122 degrees, which means it

will work in almost all situations. This system comes with the ease of plug and play technology.

Check on your yard during the night with up to 65-feet of clear recordings. The video compression also reduces 50 to 60 percent of clarity issues. When a motion event happens, you'll be sent a photo of it to your phone. To reduce false events, you can focus only on the most critical areas of your home.

The list price for the Hiseeu system is \$169.99, but currently, Amazon offers it for \$149.99.

Ring Stick Up Cam Plug-In

Although this device is wired, it works with Alexa. You can stick the camera inside or outside. There are privacy settings to make sure the camera doesn't record more than you'd like it to, including audio privacy.

When you have the Live View option turned on, you'll be able to monitor your camera feed from a smartphone (with optional Wi-Fi turned on). You can also get the optional Ring Protect Plan to review videos for a full 60 days.

This setup is simple and includes one or two cameras. One is \$99.99 and two are \$199.98. Both setups come with the option to pay for them over five months via Amazon.

ANRAN Home Security Camera System

This system works outside in temperatures ranging from 14 degrees to 122 degrees. In other words, it's not great for the Midwestern and Northern sections of the country, but it would be fantastic for the lower half of the contiguous 48 states.

Like most of the other wired cameras, ANRAN's home security system allows you to store the video locally or to watch it live on your smartphone. It also has false alert zones, so that you can make sure it works to the best of its abilities.

Please note that the cameras don't come with a battery, but they do need them. Get a four-camera system for only \$159.99 from Amazon. Need a monitor to go with it? Upgrade to the \$249.99 package.

ZOSI Home Security Camera System



You can choose whether to sync the ZOSI home security system to a wired and wireless configuration. Either way, this eight-camera system gives you control over your entire house. The optional DVR features make it even better as you can record continuously, record on a schedule, record only when motion is detected, or recycle record to make sure you never run out of space.

With local viewing, you can keep the system fully wired and watch your videos on a monitor. If you choose to engage the Wi-Fi system, you'll also have the option to watch videos via your smartphone. You'll also receive push notifications whenever there's motion detected.

The night vision that these cameras provide gives you an 80-foot view, along with a 90-degree viewing angle. If you consider that you get eight cameras to work with, this is going to give you a fantastic level of protection.

Get the eight-camera system from Amazon for \$269.99. Want even more cameras? You can upgrade to 12 or even 16. The 16-camera setup costs \$479.99.

HeimVision Assure K26

The HeimVision camera set has fantastic durability in all types of weather. It can withstand temperatures as low as -4 degrees and as high as 122 degrees. With plug and play technology, it's super easy to see what the HeimVision records.

At nighttime, you can view the yard up to 65-feet away. You can also get notified day and night whenever a motion detector goes off. Additionally, you can conceal your privacy by obscuring part of the line view.

This system comes with four cameras, but it can be expanded to include eight of them. The package does not come with the hard drive, so you'll have to make an additional purchase. As is, the cameras can be bought from Amazon for \$129.99 (retail price is \$159.99).

Reolink 4MP Video Surveillance System



The final camera system on this list comes from Reolink. It comes with a built-in 3TB hard drive and supports recording on up to 16 different channels at the same time. There are smart zones for the motion detector, and you can record up to 100-feet away at night.

If you opt to connect this system to your Wi-Fi, you can also watch the footage free of charge via Reolink's app. Reolink has been manufacturing security systems since 2009, and they've built this particular system to withstand temperatures of 14

16 degrees to 131 degrees.

One important note: Reolink's system will only work with Reolink cameras. Therefore, if you want to add on more cameras, you'll be forced to stick with Reolink.

The retail price for this system is \$699.99. Fortunately, Amazon currently offers it for \$599.99.

Final Thoughts

All of the above cameras came in with more than 4 stars, so you know that they're going to do a good job. However, there are also hundreds and hundreds more options available, so feel free to check out some other cameras before making your choice. We're pretty confident that in the end, though, you'll choose one of the 14 security systems listed above to protect your home.



DO I NEED BODY ARMOR?



Body armor might seem like an ancient relic (see photo above), but the modern interpretation of it includes ballistic and bulletproof vests. These items could be extremely helpful during a number of situations, ranging from social unrest to someone trying to break into your home. And the best part is that body armor isn't nearly as expensive as you might be thinking.

BODY ARMOR: PROTECTIVE TYPES

There are two main types of body armor in the modern age: concealed vests and plates that are visible to anyone. So, which type should you get? Let's explore both in more detail.

A concealed vest generally goes underneath a top layer. It is quite effective at stopping knife attacks, handguns, and pieces of glass. However, if your opponent has something stronger such as a rifle, they're not going to do you much good. Additionally, concealed vest only protects your torso area, which

On the other hand, the military employs external combat plates. There are multi-piece plates, stand-alone systems, and plates that have room for your gear. The military utilizes multi-piece plates, and that tells you a lot about which type works the best. Even better, when it comes to a rifle, these plates are able to stand their own.

WHAT TYPE DO I NEED?

Although it may take a bit longer to put on a plate system, the reality is that this will protect you much better than a simple concealed vest. Therefore, if you need body armor at all, you should probably consider getting multi-piece plates.

Of course, any type of body armor is better than none at all. If all you can get is a concealed vest, it still has to work better than going against a bad guy with no protection whatsoever.

FEATURES TO LOOK FOR



There are a minimum of three different categories that your body armor must fall within if you want it to be effective. We'll begin with the way it fits.

COMFORTABLE FIT

Body armor isn't going to do much for you if it doesn't fit properly. Therefore, make sure you try on the armor and get a good fit. Next, it needs to be comfortable. After all, you might end up wearing your armor for an extended period of time. Your best bet is to invest in armor that's fully adjustable and padded.

PROTECTION

This is, of course, the most important category to consider. After all, what good is it to have body armor that doesn't provide proper protection? Try it on and make sure it can withstand the effects of a knife or gun. Make sure it's not too loose because that could open up areas of your body unexpectedly.

MOBILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

When it comes to body armor, you need to retain your general flexibility and mobility. In other words, your protection must not hamper your ability to move quickly and crouch. You want to be able to run as quickly as you always can. It's important to rely on your natural defenses and not to just fall back on your armor. Whenever possible, it's best to prevent yourself from getting shot or stabbed at all.

WHY WOULD I NEED BODY ARMOR?

Okay, let's face it; body armor is cool and all, but do you really need it? The answer is yes, especially in two different scenarios.

First up is a home invasion. There's a very real possibility that a home invasion could happen, and you need to prepare for that right now. Home invaders move pretty quickly, which means you'll need to be able to put on your armor without losing a lot of time. Again, this highlights the necessity of getting a comfortable fit. If it only takes a few seconds to put on, it'll definitely be worth it, especially if the invader comes at you with a gun or knife.

The second main reason to own some body armor is civil unrest. Imagine for a second that a hurricane has ravaged your area, leaving people unsafe and trying to move to a better location. This type of mass chaos could get out of control fast, and body armor will help protect you. In this scenario, you may wish to have a lighter version of the armor, like a concealed vest, to help you move through the madness without attracting attention.

IS BODY ARMOR A GOOD INVESTMENT FOR HOME INVASIONS?



As you can see in the photo above, the police officers have concealed vests on underneath their shirts. This won't protect them from everything but taking a moment to put these vests on could still save their lives. When it comes to a home invasion,

the same principle applies. However, body armor isn't your only line of defense, nor should it be the first line, either.

Other things you should consider prioritizing before body armor include:

- A Handgun
- Alarm
- Solid Doors
- Shotgun or Carbine
- Trimmed Hedges

If you already have these items in place, it's time to start thinking about what type of body armor will best protect you. What you shouldn't do, though, is rely on body armor in lieu of these other protective techniques.

IS BODY ARMOR A GOOD INVESTMENT FOR SOCIAL UNREST?

In regard to social unrest, body armor just might be your best bet, especially if it's concealed. Let's assume for a moment that you're dealing with a type of unrest that's really scary but isn't going to stop the government from working. In this type of situation, you're going to want to protect your body without having to hurt others (unless you're in a true self-defense moment).

Making your way as quickly as possible through the crowd without drawing too much attention to yourself is best. This means that you shouldn't have body armor plates, nor should you be open-carrying a gun (especially not a rifle, as these are far more noticeable than a handgun). Instead, stick a knife and/or a handgun where it won't be seen, slip into the concealed vest, and keep your head down. This will help you make it out far more easily than brandishing a gun.

DOES BODY ARMOR REALLY PROVIDE GOOD PROTECTION?

All you have to do is look at the police or military to know that yes, body armor is a good way to protect yourself. It might feel a bit silly to wear the armor at first, but as long as you've followed our guidelines

can maneuver easily, it just may make the difference between living and dying.

WEAR PLATES IN URBAN AREAS

When you're making your way through dangerous urban areas (and we mean dangerous as in the bad part of Detroit at 2 a.m., not your local supermarket), body armor plates are worth their weight in gold. If you add civil unrest into the mix, this becomes doubly true. Trying to work your way through these areas without any type of protection at all is foolish and could leave you dead.

DON'T WEAR PLATES IN A RURAL AREA

On a daily basis, there's no need to wear plates in a rural area. That's because the distance between you and your neighbors is much farther apart. Additionally, if you're in a rural area and need to take off on foot, plates could quickly tire you out. Therefore, if you're going to wear anything at all, make do with a concealed vest. Another option you could use would be camouflage and stealthy movements.

DOWNSIDES OF BODY ARMOR



One important aspect of wearing body armor that most people don't pay attention to is how much it marks you. And we don't mean bruises. Instead, we're talking about the reaction other people will have when they can tell you're wearing it.

The average reaction to seeing someone in body armor during a SHTF scenario is likely not going to work toward your advantage. You see, in the eyes of other people, the fact that you're wearing armor must

mean you have lots of stuff that's priceless, right? And do you know what that will do to people who have priceless things? If you guessed that they'll be gunning for you, then you win the prize.

You can help reduce the risk of becoming a target by wearing only a concealed vest. Of course, this also reduces the effectiveness of your armor. It's basically a lose-lose situation if someone gets the drop on you.

Another risk of wearing body armor is how much more quickly you'll become fatigued. Yes, you should still be able to run while wearing it. Your running time shouldn't even be very compromised. But the problem is that it'll seriously wear down your endurance. In other words, you'll be able to run a mile in just about the same amount of time as usual. When you're done, though, you may not be ready to run again any time soon.

During a more normal, non-SHTF situation, you're going to attract even more attention if you're obviously wearing armor. Most people will probably give you a wide berth, but there may be a few idiots who decide to mess with you. Keep in mind that you can't do anything to them unless they hurt you first. And even still, we don't recommend doing much. The police are going to decide what to do with you, after all, and they probably aren't going to like seeing you in full armor. So, be careful at all times.

UPSIDES OF BODY ARMOR

Body armor makes statement about you, and that can be scary. However, it can also become a warning for others. Even the most desperate man will avoid a fight he can't win (in most situations, anyway), and when you're in full armor, their odds of winning are very low. Also, to put it quite simply, body armor is cool. You'll definitely attract like-minded people and being with a group of others who are also wearing armor will provide you with a lot of protection.

Aside from the aesthetics, there's also the fact that body armor can keep you alive when you'd die otherwise. For this one reason alone, it might be better to wear it than to try to blend in.

CLEARING UP MISCONCEPTIONS

There are many misconceptions about body armor. The first and most potentially deadly of which is that you're not going to get hurt when you're wearing it. As any soldier knows, that's just not true.

What will happen is that you'll usually be knocked down and may even lose consciousness for a few seconds. Anyone who has ever been shot while wearing a bulletproof vest knows that they very rarely hop right back up and get back into the thick of things. Instead, you're likely to suffer from bruising and may even need a few days off to recover.

The point of body armor is to keep you alive, not to prevent you from having any injuries. Keep this in mind when deciding whether or not to invest in body armor.

Also, please remember that even a concealed vest probably isn't going to be completely concealed. Whether people can simply tell you're wearing one or they can actually see it poking out of your shirt, you're going to get some attention.

The most important thing we can tell you is that bulletproof vests (which are actually bullet-resistant) are not always rated for knives. So yes, this means you might take a shot without dying, but then a hand-to-hand battle with someone wielding a knife could take you out. Because of this, you're going to want to look into what type of vest can keep you safe from both threats.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Whether or not you decide to wear body armor is a personal choice. In some situations, it can definitely help you survive. In others, though, it might be more of a hindrance. Therefore, you need to assess what type of scenario you're in very quickly. Then, whether you put it on or keep it off, you need to work your way through the area without drawing attention to yourself.



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