



# 10 DIY Home Security Upgrades

Make your home more secure and add peace of mind with these do-it-yourself projects that are relatively simple and affordable.



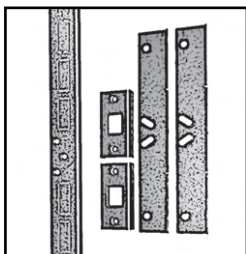
**Secure all vulnerable points of entry** such as doors and windows. Think a stock latch will stop an intruder with a pry bar? Think again, then try installing a pin lock. To install, simply drill a hole. If you want to lock the window in a partially opened position, drill a second hole. Pin locks are also great security additions to your patio doors.



**Use tamper proof screws.** An experienced burglar can easily bypass your shed lock hardware with a screw driver. Any exposed screw heads on your hinges and other hardware are vulnerable. Instead of standard flat head or Phillips screws, try Allen, Torx or hex headed cap screws to hinder break-ins, because the latter require special tools.

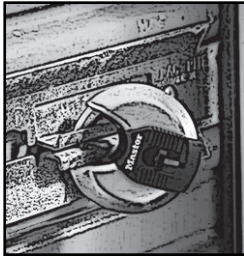


**Secure door hinges.** Since shed doors usually swing out, the hinge pins are accessible from outside where a thief can simply pop out the pins and remove the door. Replace this hardware with a security hinge equipped with tamper-proof pins, or retrofit an existing hinge by removing the center screws on both sides. Next, insert a finish screw through one side until it protrudes about 1/4-inch. Drill out the receiving hole slightly so that when the door is closed the finish screw head engages the other hinge. Now, the door can't be taken off even if the hinge pin is removed.

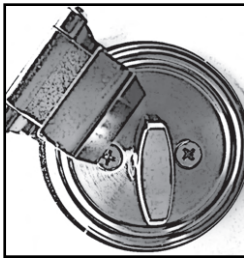


**Reinforce locks.** An expensive "pick-proof" deadbolt on your front door won't stop most burglars because they know how to pick a lock or force their way in by splitting the doorjamb. Stop them in their tracks by installing door armor hardware made of 16-gauge galvanized steel. Installation takes less than 30 minutes.

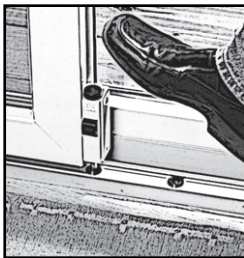
## 10 DIY Home Security Upgrades *(continued)*



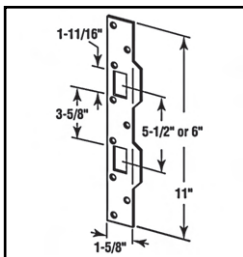
**Install locks with thicker shackles.** With some sturdy bolt cutters, a thief can cut through any lock. That said, the thicker the lock shackle and less it's exposed, the more secure your lock will be. Additionally, the type of locking mechanism makes a difference in how easily the lock can be picked. Fortunately some keyed padlocks are resistant to bolt cutters.



**Install a deadbolt protection device.** Another effective way to discourage lock-picking thieves is to reinforce your deadbolt with a deadbolt protection device that slides a lock over the deadbolt handle to impede it from turning.



**Install foot locks on patio doors.** Patio door locks are easy to pick too, but there's a simple way to get some added security. You can install a foot lock that fastens along the bottom of the door and has a bolt that fits into a grommet to hold the door secure. Or, install a door guardian that attaches at the top of the door. Both locks allow the door to open three inches without compromising security. Installation takes about 10 minutes. Screw the bracket containing the pin to the door, then drill holes and insert grommets in the track for the pin to slide into.



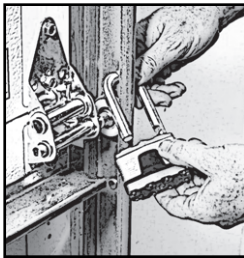
**Reinforce a door's weak point.** Reinforce the jamb, with a heavy-duty strike plate and extra-long screws to give it the added strength needed to withstand a good bashing. If your deadbolt was installed within the last 10 years, it's probably already reinforced. Simply remove the strike plate to check. If it's heavy steel with at least 3-inch screws or has a heavy reinforcing plate, you're all set. If not, get reinforced strike plate hardware. Remove the old strike plate to install, then hold the new one in place and deeply score around it. Chisel out space for the new plate, then mount it by driving 3-inch screws through predrilled holes.



## 10 DIY Home Security Upgrades *(continued)*



**Use a dowel in a sliding door.** Another or supplemental means to secure a sliding patio door is with a thick wooden dowel cut to size and placed at the bottom between the frame and the sliding door. For some added style, it can also be easily finished with sanding, stain and varnish.



**Secure the garage door.** Unplugging the overhead garage door opener can secure the door to a degree but physically locking the door is even better. Make a burglar's job more difficult and time-consuming by locking the door itself. If your door doesn't have a lockable latch, drill a hole in the track just above one of the rollers and slip in a sturdy padlock.





# 10 Self-Defense Strategies

These self-defense strategies work equally well for men and women. Although most courses teach skills to quickly and efficiently destroy an attacker, these strategies include more methods for preventing a confrontation to be more practical and drastically increase your chances of surviving.

- 1. Trust Your Instincts:** If the situation feels bad, don't second guess yourself. Your instinct is a built-in danger detection system. Rely on it.
- 2. Don't be an Accessible Target:** If you have the opportunity to escape a situation before it turns bad, take it.
- 3. Be Confident.** Be aware of your body language and project confidence. Predators target those who appear weak, vulnerable, frightened, confused and/or distracted. Hold your head up and keep your hands out of your pockets.
- 4. Set Strong Verbal Boundaries.** Good verbal skills are a strong self-defense tool. If you're engaged in a conversation with a predator, you're being probed for weaknesses. Be calm and speak confidently and assertively with the power of your voice.
- 5. Have a Non-Confrontational Stance.** Stand relaxed with your hips and shoulders forward, your arms bent, and your hands up and open. This posture may signal that you're willing to comply, but you'll be ready to strike if it becomes necessary, and the predator probably won't be ready for it. In a self-defense situation, one of your secret weapons is the element of surprise. If you assume a fighting posture on the other hand, this tells the attacker you're ready to fight and will probably result in them being even more aggressive.
- 6. Keep a Safe Distance.** Once an aggressor enters your personal space/comfort zone, your discomfort becomes obvious because you know you need that space to put up a fight. Try to maintain a one and a half arms length of space. If the aggressor starts closing in, use verbal boundaries. If he doesn't back off, it's time to get physical.
- 7. Use the Element of Surprise.** Most predators assume you cannot defend yourself, so take advantage of the element of surprise. If you're engaged in a conversation, you have the opportunity to use verbal skills and a non-confrontational stance to entice the aggressor into dropping his guard. If you're grabbed from behind, you must respond immediately. In either case, putting up a fight can surprise him and increase your chance of landing the first blow.
- 8. Keep Your Techniques Simple.** A loss of fine motor skills results from an adrenaline release, so simple movements like unlacing your fingers or pulling your hands out of your pockets can become much more challenging. And the odds of your executing a beautiful joint lock or high kick rapidly diminish.

## 10 Self-Defense Strategies *(continued)*

Learn techniques that are basic and stick with them in a selfdefense scenario. Here's some recommendations:

- **Heel-palm strike.** Hitting with an open hand reduces the chance that you'll injure your hand and enables you to more easily attack from a non-confrontational stance. Hold your hands up and open while you set verbal boundaries. Then, if your attacker steps into your comfort zone — **BAM!** — land it right in his face.
- **Eye strike.** The eye strike can be used in a standing or prone position. Often, simply driving your fingers toward your assailant's eyes will cause him to recoil. Even if you don't make contact, it creates space to set up a more devastating blow.
- **Knee strike.** This technique is recommended over any type of standing kick because it is easy to use and can be delivered while you stay centered and close to the ground. That's crucial when you're adrenalized. A knee to the groin can end a fight immediately.

**9. Don't Panic if You're Knocked Down.** Although a male assailant counts on knocking a woman to the ground, they're typically not skilled fighters. They're bullies. Now is a good time for that heel-palm strike or eye strike. And a good, solid kick either too. The side thrust kick also gives you an advantage because your legs are longer than his arms. That means he'll have to expose his body to your kick if he wants to reach you. Knee strikes also function effectively on the ground. While you struggle with your attacker, he probably won't protect his groin. Once you see an opening, get close enough to strike upward into his crotch.

**10. Follow Through.** The fight is only over when no longer exists. You must be completely committed to the battle. If you fight back and then pause, you give up the initial advantage you gained from using the element of surprise. Once your opponent knows you can fight, it becomes more difficult for you to prevail. To survive, you must continue your barrage until it's safe to stop striking and escape. **Finish the job.**



# 10 Self-Defense Strategies (continued)

## How to... ESCAPE AN ATTACK

Most attackers look for someone who appears weak, easily intimidated and already fearful. Here are some escape tactics to help you feel more confident.

### Attack your attacker

There are five parts of the body that are particularly vulnerable to external blows or pressure, which can give you enough time to get away.

#### The throat

Strike the throat with the "Y" of your hand.

OR grab his windpipe and squeeze, so that he cannot breathe.

#### The face (eyes and nose)

This is the most sensitive part of the body. The bone in the nose is thin and easily broken. Hurting your attacker's eyes will cause a loss of sight for a short period of time, giving you an opportunity to escape.

##### Palm heel strike

With hand at a gun-like position, jab toward nose, palm first. Strike nose with bottom of palm, where it is strongest. But be careful, this can kill someone.

##### Bottom fist strike

With your hand in a fist, strike down on the nose.

##### Thumb gouge

Grab head securely. Then push thumbs into the inside corner of the eyes. Rake your thumbs to the outside across the eyes.

#### The shin

Drive your heel into the shin or knee.

Kick and bring your leg back quickly. Be ready to kick again if needed.

Turn your body sideways. Put your weight on your rear foot, with the foot turned at about a 45-degree angle.

#### The knee

Your legs have some of the strongest muscles in your body and are a great weapon. But don't kick above the knee unless you have a shot at the groin. The attacker will have complete control if he gets a hold of your leg.

#### Shin scrape, stomp

If the attacker is behind you, or you cannot reach the knee, this method will also work.

Turn your foot sideways.

Drag the back edge of your shoe along his shin.

End with a swift heel stomp to the foot.

#### The groin

Knee, punch or kick in the groin. Kicking or hitting from below has less chance of being blocked than from straight on.

### How to get out of a wrist hold

#### One on One

If the attacker grabs your wrist with one hand, roll your wrist, thumb first, toward the "Y" of his hand. Bend the thumb backward, and the attacker should let go.

#### Two on One

If the attacker grabs your wrist with both hands, grab the fist that is being held with your free hand and pull your hand up and out.

### Practice makes perfect

It is very important to practice self-defense moves so that they become an automatic reaction when you are attacked. Otherwise, you may not react quickly enough for the moves to help.

### How to get out of body holds

Here are options to get out of other holds.

#### Headlock

Grab onto one or both legs and lift up to knock the attacker over. The attacker should let go of you to catch the fall. You could also try to hit the groin.

#### Rear bear hug

Head-butt him in the nose or hit the groin, since both of the attacker's hands are occupied and will not be used to block you.

#### Choke hold

Get your hands between his arm and your neck. Push away to prevent your air from being cut off. This may also be a good chance to use the shin scrape, stomp.

### Remember...

The best defense is **AWARENESS**. Only injure the attacker enough to get away. Shout "NO!" or "FIRE!", not "HELP!" Be loud, quick and aggressive. If the attacker is trying to rob you, just hand over what is wanted. Do not put yourself in more danger by trying to fight. Never be coerced into a vehicle. Chances of survival drop dramatically if taken to a secondary location.



# Blend In During Dangerous Situations

Unless you want an easy target on your back, you don't want to make a spectacle of yourself in most threatening situations. Attackers, thieves and other dangerous people need little more reason to target you than the fact that you drew their attention in some way. To protect yourself and increase your chances of helping others, here's some tips to help you blend in.

**Avoid bright clothing.** Even if you're wearing inexpensive apparel from WalMart instead of the Gucci store, there's nothing that says "look at me" like that bright pink top with the yellow smiley face on the front. Bright colors draw the eye and unwanted attention. Try for a neutral look, even if it's not all that stylish.

**Don't wear your wealth.** Once that mob mentality takes hold, normally law-abiding folks may begin to see a disaster scenario as a cheap excuse to rob and loot. Don't give them any added incentive to target you for your watch, jewelry and other conspicuous valuables.

**Hide your stores.** If you're prudent enough to have accumulated a few survival supplies, make certain you stash them in a well-hidden place. Don't brag about prepping, don't talk about your cache, and definitely don't store them in a place where they can be easily seen and stolen. Here's a few places you can hide stuff:

- Air vents
- Air ducts
- PVC pipes
- Under floorboards
- Crawl spaces
- Drop ceilings
- Wall cubbies behind pictures
- Under stair boards
- Potted plants in plain sight
- Paint cans
- Laundry soap containers
- Dry dog food bags
- Bottom of a clothes hamper
- Inside an old coat or ugly sweater

## Blend In During Dangerous situations *(continued)*

**Be careful what you throw away.** Would-be thieves can simply check out your garbage to get ideas about your prep stash, your wealth and other personal habits. If you want to keep your life private, be sure to break down your trash to the point that it leaves little to no evidence of what it is or once contained.

**Avoid reacting violently.** You may have no other option left but to defend yourself, but since violence incites more violence, consider it a last resort. First, try to deescalate the situation, because it's generally safer and will help you keep a lower profile.

**Don't go overboard on personal hygiene.** If it's a prolonged disaster situation, you may want to consider not looking like you just emerged from the beauty parlor, especially if everyone else isn't well-groomed and clean. Don't stand out in any way.

**Shed that excess weight now.** Nothing says ease, comfort and a full pantry like that body fat.

**Act with calm purpose, like you're supposed to be there.** Your demeanor is key to having a low profile during a disaster situation. Always practice good situational awareness. Take stock of your environment without looking shifty or being on the verge of panic. Act like you belong there, as if it's just another normal situation. Even a dull one.

**Hold your tongue.** Frightened, nervous people often have a tendency to let their emotions come spilling out of their mouths. Don't do that. Be quiet to avoid the slightest bit of unwanted attention.

**Hang with the pack.** In situations with pinned-down crowds, stragglers make easy targets for predators. Try to blend into the crowd by taking up position right in their midst. Otherwise, make a run for it, especially if you've got the room to move, the resolve, and the strategic advantage to do so.

**Move with ease.** Once that adrenaline gets pumping, you may be tempted to move rapidly. Don't. Fast movement only draws unwanted attention and marks you as a possible threat. If you have the luxury, always move at a normal, unremarkable pace in a dangerous situation.

**Kill the lights.** Nothing makes for the unintentional calling card like leaving the light on. Especially if the power is down, because it may indicate an alternate power source such as a generator. Be sure to black out any windows and openings at night using thick blankets.







# Firsthand Tips For Surviving a Violent Collapse

Since the trajectory of our society is trending downward at an alarming rate, it serves a prudent purpose to consider how you might respond should you get caught up in the potential violence of dramatic changes in our way of life.

Have you made material plans? For the moment, forget your emergency cache, survival plans, and other preparations. After all, carefully laid plans often fly out the window at the onset of a serious crisis.

So here is another question: are you mentally and emotionally prepared to face the strife and violence that could result from the collapse of our institutions and support structures?

What follows are excerpts from a Selco Begovic interview\* that the humble might find helpful and thought-provoking. For others, let it serve as a reality check.

If you're not familiar with Selco, he survived the Balkan war of the 90's in a city under siege – a brutal, constantly life-threatening situation devoid of the most basic modern comforts such as electricity, running water, and food distribution. From his first-hand perspective of the reality of survival under the harshest conditions he frankly shares what works and what does not.

\*Since Selco is Bosnian, and English is not his primary language, the text has been edited here to make his thoughts more easily understood.

## **How prevalent was violence when the stuff hit the fan (SHTF) in Bosnia?**

It was wartime and chaos. Among all the Balkan regional conflicts in those years, the Bosnian conflict was the most brutal for multiple reasons... historically, politically, and otherwise.

To understand why violence was common and very brutal, you need to first imagine being “bombarded” with a huge amount of information (propaganda) which instills in you some strong feelings of fear and hate.

Violence grows fast and easy out of fear and hate. Over a brief period, you see how people do things that you could not imagine before.

I can say that violence was an everyday thing... an ordinary thing in the various daily activities that became a fight for survival.

## Firsthand Tips For Surviving a Violent Collapse *(continued)*

When you constrain people in a small region without enough resources, you can expect violence.

We were living a normal life, and then suddenly we were thrown into a very different way of living. For example, if you couldn't solve a problem with someone to get a healthy outcome, you might just solve it by launching a rocket from an RPG through the window of his living room.

Hate stripped down the layers of humanity until it suddenly seemed like normal behavior to level an occupied apartment building with shells from a tank.

Nothing that I saw or read before collapse could have prepared me for the level of violence and blindness to it... engulfing the lives of kids, elders, civilians, and the innocent.

Do not make the mistake of saying "it cannot happen here" because I made that mistake too.

Do not underestimate the power of propaganda, fear, hate, or the lowest human instincts, no matter how modern and good your society is right now – and how deeply you believe that "it cannot happen here."

The thing that is important for readers to understand is that we were a normal modern society one day, and then suddenly drowning in carnage in the span of a few weeks.

### **You've mentioned warlords and gangs in several of your articles. Were they responsible for most of the violence or did it come from others?**

The opposing armies engaged with various kinds of weapons that delivered constant shelling.

For example, in the span of 30 seconds a few multiple rocket launchers (VBR) could bring destruction in an area of 3-4 apartment buildings. Being there in that moment and surviving gives you a completely new view of life.

Snipers were a constant threat. You adapt to a way of living over time that includes constantly scanning the area in front – where your next step is going to be – with considerations like whether you are going to be visible and from what vantage points. It becomes second nature.

The most brutal violence was pure lawlessness, with a complete lack of order between the different factions and militias. In some periods, there were militias or gangs who simply ruled the cities or parts of the cities where they were absolute masters of everything including life and death.



## Firsthand Tips For Surviving a Violent Collapse *(continued)*

In this lawlessness, you could be small and uninteresting as an individual, or join some larger group of people to be stronger... usually with some family, militia, or gang.

Gangs might consist of 300 to 500 people who “officially” were a unit or militia operating for some faction. In truth, they mostly operated for their own concerns.

Those concerns included owning part of the black market, having prisons for forced labor or ransom, attacking people and houses for resources, and smuggling people from dangerous areas.

Violence from those groups was the most immediate... the most visible.

If those people showed up at your door you could obey, fight, or negotiate... but mostly you could not ask for help from any kind of authority, because there was no real authority.

In any society, no matter where you are living, there are some people who are waiting for the SHTF to go out and do violent things. These are mostly small-time criminals and violent people... not openly violent when there's a normal system in place to restrain and punish them.

Some gang leaders that I knew were deranged people with an uncanny type of charisma that makes others follow them... people who just seemed to wait for their time to rise.

Those kinds of people, together with the criminal organizations that are already operating in virtually every city in the world, are the backbone of SHTF gangs.

### **Who were the most likely victims?**

Simply put, the most likely victims were the people who had interesting things without sufficient means to defend those things. Although it was not always that simple.

One of the first houses that got raided in my neighborhood belonged to a wealthy family. This was right at the beginning of the collapse while there was still a bit of order.

They had a nice house with bars on the windows – a fairly good setup for defense – and they also had enough people inside to mount a defense against the mob.

Even so, they got raided because they were known to be wealthy... attacked with enough force to be overwhelmed.



## Firsthand Tips For Surviving a Violent Collapse *(continued)*

What are your chances against 150 angry, determined people attacking your home? Your chances are going to be low, no matter how good and tough you are.

People who were alone were also an easy target, as were old people who lacked support from family or friends.

People without obvious wealth and tempting stuff were targeted too for their skill and knowledge. These could be easily recruited by some faction or group, against their will of course.

### **How could a person limit their chances of becoming a victim of violence, and do you have any recommendations for preparing to face the possibility of violence?**

It's an extensive topic, but here are some simple steps to start with:

- Keep a low profile and don't attract attention.
- Don't identify as a prepper, before or after a SHTF scenario. Don't announce or telegraph that you are prepping for an EMP, civil collapse, apocalypse, or whatever. With that you are risking the probability that when the SHTF, people will remember that you have valuables or interesting things in your home.
- Your home should look ordinary. For example, if you are living in the city on a street where all houses look similar, don't conspicuously fortify your home. You'll just attract attention.
- Your defense should be based on subtler means such as reinforcing doors and windows from the inside. Make changes in your yard to limit the potential of attacks with trees, fences, bushes, etc. Another strategy in the more advanced stages of collapse is to make your home look abandoned or already looted.

Understand what survival really is. Survival is about staying alive, not about maintaining comfort at all costs.

Too often I saw people lose their lives because they were overly attached to their possessions such as land, house, car and other valuables. When they had the chance to flee at a critical moment, they didn't take advantage of it. Remember, everything can be replaced except your life.

Forget about statements like "I will defend it with my life" or "over my dead body." The real SHTF is not about being overly confident and gung-ho. It is hard and brutal. When you're gone, who will be left to care for your family? Trying to deal with violence like you see in the movies will not serve you well.

As a matter of survival, be prepared to leave your home in an instant, regardless of the valuables and possessions you have there.



## Firsthand Tips For Surviving a Violent Collapse *(continued)*

Be mentally prepared for violence. Sure, it may seem like an impossible task in many respects, especially if the violence is widespread... but you can still minimize the shock by taking some steps now.

If you are not familiar with what violence really is, you can get a bit of exposure to it in relatively normal times. For example, you could volunteer at a local hospital, in the ER or similar... or maybe try to work with some homeless people. In addition to getting some small scale exposure, these activities may help you learn some practical skills you can use in a SHTF scenario.

Acquire some means and physical skills to defend yourself and loved ones against violence.

No matter how old or young you are, and regardless of your gender or religion, I can assure you that you are capable of defending yourself – violently if necessary. It is only a matter of being thrust into certain situations, and the intensity of the threat. That doesn't mean that you will be easily willing, much less enjoy it.

Learn some self-defense skills and practice them... even basic skills in hand-to-hand combat.

Acquire a reliable weapon such as a firearm and know how to use it. The worst-case scenario is to have a weapon that you try for the first time in a SHTF crisis, so be familiar with your self-defense weapons. Devise a plan with your entire family to survive a home invasion and practice it to minimize fatal mistakes.

Use common sense.

I know survivalists who daydream about using weapons against bad guys in a collapse... they fancy themselves as the typical movie superhero... saving the innocents and killing villains.

In a real collapse, a lot of things seem surreal and get easily blurred to the point that you can't easily distinguish the bad guys from the good guys. Sometimes the good guys were gang members who acted like lunatics, but they were simply bringing food to their kids.

There are no superheroes when the SHTF. When the fanciful ones show up, they usually end up dead quickly. So, consider yourself an ordinary person, with whatever preparations you've made... your mindset and skills.

Also consider that the use of violence is a last resort. Once engaged, you run the risk of getting injured. What medical help is readily available in a SHTF collapse? At worst, you could get yourself killed.



## Firsthand Tips For Surviving a Violent Collapse *(continued)*

It is a time when even a small cut can eventually kill you through infection and lack of proper medical care.

### **Consider a single mom with a household full of girls. In an SHTF scenario, what would be her best strategy to keep everyone safe?**

This profile will look like a vulnerable and ideal target.

Whether you are a man or woman, you can obviously point and shoot a rifle, but there are other steps you can take to prepare, particularly connecting with other people who have other strengths, skill sets and resources. Make friends.

### **Was it safer in rural or urban areas, and what was rural living like in your experience?**

In my experience, it was not necessarily safer in the country than it was in the city. It came down to people and resources.

While the city had more people and less resources, the rural areas had less people and more resources – stuff that had real value in a SFTF crisis. With fewer people, the potential for violent conflict was lower.

As another advantage, rural people typically had more grit. They were often more accustomed to physically demanding work. They grew their own food, kept livestock, maintained a simpler life with much more self-reliance. After collapse, they were that much more acclimated to the demands of hardship than city folk. That included things like a lack of electricity, running water, and the sort of fragile connectivity the city folk rely too heavily on.

Rural people were connected in more meaningful ways prior to collapse. They knew their neighbors and were more apt to rely on community. They could organize quickly and easily. They had each other's backs. They also had easy access to shared resources such as farmland, forests, and waterways. And they had the kind of necessary skills for living that collectively got the job done.

### **What types of weapons did people have for self-defense?**

Prior to collapse, Bosnia had a political system that ensured it was not common to own a weapon legally. Owning one illegally could mean a lot of troubles.

Just prior to the SHTF troubles, it became possible to buy different weapons on the black market, but most people did not pursue it.



## Firsthand Tips For Surviving a Violent Collapse *(continued)*

After the collapse, it was possible to get a weapon through trade.

Because of the military doctrine here prior to the collapse, we used "East Bloc" weapons. A favorite weapon was an AK-47 in a variety of editions, or older weapons like the M-48 rifle, SKS rifle, 22, etc.

People used what they had, so they were lucky if they had any kind of pistol and knife.

Weapons became more available later, so people acquired them more. Many of those weapons were junk that some warlords "imported,"... 50 to 60 years old, lacking proper ammunition, and/or not in operating condition. Naturally, these caused a lot of accidental deaths.

I remember people storming an abandoned army barracks that was already looted. Still, they managed to find RPG's in one building, while another part of that building was burning.

Two guys were trying to figure out a single-use RPG. While they were messing with it – clearly not knowing how that thing worked – they accidentally armed it and launched a rocket that flew through the crowd. It didn't hit anyone but exploded into a wall 100 meters from where they stood.

They were smiling, clearly happy because they thought they had figured out how that thing worked.

### **What weapons would you have on hand to prepare for a SHTF scenario?**

This is a favorite topic amongst preppers with endless opinions. Frankly, the discussion is overrated.

I have used various weapons in a real crisis, such as an AK-47. I have also tried and tested many different weapons. This much I know: what works for me may not work for you.

I recommend common, easily serviceable weapons for ease of use, availability of spare parts and ammunition.

Matters of caliber and such are up for debate.

Most importantly, you need to know how your weapon works and how to use it.

If you have more freedom of gun ownership where you live, be thankful. You'll have more options and better opportunities to hone your skills.



## Firsthand Tips For Surviving a Violent Collapse *(continued)*

Just understand that using a weapon in a real-life situation is nothing like shooting at beer bottles with your friends after a barbecue.

In a SHTF situation, you may have to fire a weapon while you are exhausted, dirty, hungry, wounded, in the dark... even with folks screaming right next to you.

### **When should you use violence?**

Contrary to some popular beliefs in the prepper community, violence is a last resort.

Aside from increasing your chances of getting wounded or killed, engaging in violence can escalate the situation and you run the risk of getting lost in the violence. This is a very real consequence that can have harmful, lasting effects on you.

Defend yourself and loved ones but use violent means only when necessary.

Try to develop discipline in this area with a healthy set of moral standards. Then stick to it.

### **Any final thoughts?**

Use your head and do some research before a collapse.

Understand how media influences people in forming their ideas about violence.

In my case, the media built up and stoked a situation where people feared certain others to such an extent that they hated them. Kids, women, the elderly... no one was exempt from such hate.

Find solid, independent sources of information and avoid the establishment media at all costs. Don't be among those who joined the riot simply because they followed the misguided influence of popular media.







# Security & Self Defense

**Security** is an ongoing and proactive process in which we Detect, Deny, Deter, Delay, Defeat and/or Destroy. Not all the components are required for every security plan but each of the components should be considered. Those who lack a trust in God will try to take from those who have been blessed through preparedness and production. We have a right and duty to protect ourselves and our livelihood. These locations should be considered in your personal security plan: your body, articles of clothing and items to carry, main residence, backup residence(s), vehicle(s), outbuilding(s), animal shelters, storage facility(s), garden, yard, farmland.

In ordinary times we fall under the rule of law and each state has different rules. In crisis or emergencies of prolonged power outages and the absence of an organized police force, laws may not govern but your well-formed conscience should; what is morally and legally required of me?

## Here are some important items to have on-hand:

- Heavy duty locks and security bars for all entry points, such as doors and windows
- Reinforced doors and windows to resist entry
- Standalone security systems that operate on battery and cellular networks
- Motion-activated lights to deter potential intruders
- Natural elements such as groomed landscaping to avoid providing cover to intruders as well as thorny bushes or cacti near any perimeters
- Tools that can be used for self-defense including means for communicating distress calls and weapons that match the degree of training each person is experienced with and comfortable deploying
  - *What actions have I practiced and am willing to take?*
  - *Who will I call for help?*
- Emergency supplies including first aid, flashlights, extra food and water

As people of good will, we know that safety and security are important for ourselves and others. With the uncertainty of future events, we have compiled some helpful tips to secure your location during tough times:

- Practice situational awareness and avoid dangerous situations whenever possible
  - *How can I modify my behavior to avoid a threatening situation?*
- Develop an emergency plan and practice it with your family or roommates
  - *Practice, refine, and practice, refine again; train to standard*
- Keep a low profile and do not draw attention to your home or resources
  - *What visual, auditory, or olfactory signals can I use to avoid physical contact?*
- Connect with your community and build relationships with your neighbors

Strength comes in numbers (CONNECTEDNESS) and having just one other person makes keeping a 360° a lot easier, each person has 180° responsibility. The fireteam (four people) is the basic building

## Security & Self Defense *(continued)*

block of all military units. Four people establish a 360° by each taking 90° like the headings on a compass. It's scriptural too. Jesus had a fireteam when Peter, James and John accompanied him on different occasions. A squad is three fireteams and a leader – 13 people. Jesus had his fireteam with the 12 Apostles. Who is your fireteam and squad? They should be within walking or bike distance so that in an extended crisis you can support each other.

### Other security considerations and tips:

- Describe the threats in your area of operation and understand active (criminal/enemy) versus passive (vulnerabilities/risks)
  - *Know your temporal threat level: low, medium high?*
- What means do you have to protect yourself and where are they?
- What are your escape routes and have you practiced them?
- When on foot, your critical danger zone is the 21 feet around you.
- What are the trends of event? To include time of day, day of week or month, weather, etc.
- Test all processes/equipment in all situations (day, night, rain, cold, heat).
- Refine your plan and replace bad gear and revise processes as needed.
- How will you deter/protect when you are not physically present?

### Additional resources:

- CORAC website: <https://corac.co>
- **4 Primary Rules of Firearm Safety:**
  - 1) *Always Keep Firearm Pointed in a Safe direction. Never point your gun at anything you do not intend to shoot. ...*
  - 2) *Treat All Guns as Though They are Loaded. ...*
  - 3) *Keep Your Finger Off the Trigger until You are Ready to Shoot. ...*
  - 4) *Always Be Sure of Your Target and What's Beyond It.*

*He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty, (2) will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust." (3) For he will deliver you from the snares of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; (4) he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. (5) You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, (6) nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday. (7) A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand; but it will not come near you. (8) You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. (9) Because you have made the Lord your refuge. The Most High your habitation, (10) no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent. (11) For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways. (12) On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. (13) You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot. (14) Because he clings to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him. Because he knows my name. (15) When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him and honor him. (16) With long life I will satisfy him, and show him my salvation.*

### Psalm 91





# Tips For Arming Yourself

Whether or not it comes down to a major collapse with the ensuing challenges, Americans have the right to bear arms. They can be used for a number of legal purposes such as hunting and sport. Another is self-defense.

Perhaps you're an old pro at exercising your 2nd Amendment rights and like to compare notes. Or maybe you're just considering the possibility of acquiring a weapon for self-defense, without the slightest clue where to start. Whatever the case, there are volumes of differing opinions strewn across the web on this subject, from expert to beginner alike. Here, then, we'll limit these recommendations to cover the most common self-defense scenarios, relying on first-hand experience with the tried-and-true. Keep in mind that what works for one person doesn't necessarily work for another, so be sure to consult other experts and do your own research.

## START WITH A GOOD KNIFE

You'll find seemingly endless options in this category, but it doesn't have to be difficult to select a trusty, multi-use blade. Just follow the lead of the USMC. They already know that the best survival knife is a strong, full tang, fixed blade knife. "Full tang" means that the metal runs all the way through from the tip of the blade to the base of the handle for superior strength, balance and durability.

Fixed blade knives come in number of blade lengths, thicknesses, shapes for different uses, and features (such as straight blade or serrated), but look no further than the Ka-Bar USMC fighting knife - the most famous fixed blade knife in the world. It was designed to serve our troops during World War II and is still doing its job, with honors, 70+ years later. It's relatively lightweight and sports full tang, straight back carbon steel with a seven inch blade. You can pick one up online for around \$100.



As a great alternative with a better grip, I carry the SP-1 combat knife by Ontario Knife. It's also designed for military and first responders. I got one on sale at Bass Pro Shops for around \$40.



## Tips For Arming Yourself *(continued)*

### HANDGUNS

While a semi-automatic handgun should not be your only weapon in a disaster situation, they come in a broad range and are highly versatile. Here's three key criteria that your weapon should meet:

- Reliable (some are more prone to breakdowns and recalls).
- Common (to ensure parts and service are widely available).
- Use 9mm, .40 S&W, or .45 ACP ammunition (which is readily available and most effective).

Handguns that meet that criteria are not only relatively inexpensive to purchase now (more so used), but might also be a bit easier to source and acquire in a disaster scenario. However, don't roll the dice procrastinating. Buy now and plan on having at least five loaded magazines on hand per handgun.



**Glock 17.** Trusted by law enforcement and military around the world because of its unsurpassed reliability, 17 round mag capacity, low weight, and performance in critical situations. Its narrower dimensions and longer barrel make it a bit more accurate than the Glock 19 at longer distances. Got one used from a highly reliable merchant for around \$550, and was in and out in under 20 minutes.



**Glock 19.** One of the most popular handguns available, it's ideal as a conventional service pistol thanks to its reduced dimensions. Use it as a dependable backup weapon or for concealed carry purpose. It may be slightly more maneuverable and easier to handle in close quarters than the Glock 17. Bought one lightly used for around \$575.



**Smith & Wesson Model 36.** An old school revolver, the .38 Chief Special was designed for plainclothesmen and off-duty police officers. These small revolvers were designed to fire full power rounds and are as simple and easy to use as they are reliable. Got a good one handed down, but they go for around \$850 used.

Whatever your price range and preference, handguns are excellent for self-defense, capable of taking down game, and it's easier to manage your ammo compared to most rifles. Keep in mind they have limited effective range and accuracy, so in order to be consistently proficient with handguns you're going to need to practice/train consistently. If you've got a bug-out-bag, make sure it includes a handgun and ammo.



## Tips For Arming Yourself *(continued)*

### 22 LONG RIFLE

Although there's likely not the perfect survival firearm - the Ruger 10/22 Takedown would surely be a contender. Although any .22 long rifle will make a great survival weapon, this one should not be underestimated. It's small, compact, affordable, deadly accurate, and easily capable of bagging small to medium-sized game. The ammo is cheap and more practical than larger caliber (it's much easier to tote 1,000 small rounds of .22 than 1,000 rounds of larger 5.56). Pair a suppressor with subsonic ammo and this rifle is nearly silent. Runs about \$500 new and \$400 used.



### AR-15

For the sheer versatility (there are numerous variations and modifications you can make to this weapon), this list of recommendations would be remiss without the AR-15. Parts are cheap and readily available, 5.56 ammo is one of the easiest rifle rounds to find in the U.S., and it can take down a wide variety animals. Beyond hunting, consider it a solid choice for self-defense in densely populated urban areas. For weight, reliability, bullet capacity and ease of carry, the 12.5" AR-15 is widely considered the do-all length. Overall, there are not many situations where this weapon won't get the job done. There's a wide price range for new and used starting at about \$400.



### LEVER-ACTION RIFLE

Why this recommendation? If your goal is to avoid unwanted attention, the look of a modern rifle such as an AR-15 will likely trigger people. Consider something that will allow for a lower-profile. Good lever-action rifles have seen a bit of a comeback, no doubt for their reputation as do-all utility weapons. Many are well made, reliable, and offer rock-solid performance in a wide variety of environments. The Marlin Model 336 pictured below goes for about \$840.



## Tips For Arming Yourself *(continued)*

### SHOT GUN

If it hops, runs or flies, there's nothing quite like a shotgun to help get it to the table and into hungry bellies. Pump-action shotguns from brands like Remington and Mossberg are among the most reliable made, and the features you can swap out for different uses (such as grips, buttstocks, recoil pads, etc.) without a tool, make them quite versatile when shifting from hunting to home defense. Best of all these simpler systems like pump-action have little to no chance of failing when you need it to perform. The Mossberg Flex 500 pictured below goes for about \$500.



### YOUR BRAIN

The most effective weapon in any defense situation is your brain. No matter what you have at hand to use in your defense, you can always count on the ability to think tactically. Start by keeping a cool head before you react in a frenzied point-and-shoot panic.

**Remember:** what works for one person might not work for another. If you're on foot, toting added weight can slow you down and strain your body. You want a lightweight weapon that's compact and easy to carry. You also want to find a weapon that can be used in your area to take game and defend yourself. In big game country, a .22 long rifle might not be enough. In the southeast, a .22 long rifle might work extremely well. Find the right caliber and configuration that not only works for you but for your environment. Get a weapon that's versatile and can be used for a variety of situations.





# Tips to Survive a Home Invasion

Before it even happens, get proactive and make your home more secure with these do-it-yourself projects that are relatively simple and affordable:

<https://corac.co/2023/12/16/10-diy-home-security-upgrades/>

What are the odds of a home invasion? Sadly it's more common than people think. In normal times you're eight times more likely to be involved in a home invasion attack than a house fire -- and don't make the mistake of thinking home invasions only take place in high-crime urban areas. The suburbs and rural areas are targets too. In disaster/crisis scenarios such as we saw during Katrina, the odds get worse on every front.

That's why it's important to plan a home defense strategy now that will keep you and your family safe if you're ever faced with a violent home invasion.

## Your Firearms

You often hear these stories on the news. When it comes to survival, a common element includes an armed homeowner that was adept at using the firearm. Nonetheless, the average handgun owner hasn't learned how to use their gun(s) outside of the controlled atmosphere of a shooting range, so aren't really prepared for a dangerous, up-close-and-personal situation in confined quarters. That's why your first line of defense is far more important than a gun.

## Your Brain

The most effective weapon in a home defense situation is your brain. No matter what you have at hand to use in your defense, you can always count on the ability to think tactically. Start by keeping a cool head before you react in a frenzied point-and-shoot panic. Better to be prepared by devising a safer and more realistic home invasion defense strategy which should include:

- **A Code Word.** Come up with a code word that will inform your entire family that it's go time... time to spring into action... DEFCON 1. Keep it simple. For example, "**BREACH!**" is pretty simple to the point.
- **A Safe Room.** Designate a "safe room" in your home where your family can muster in a crisis. Make sure it's stocked with the stuff that will help you survive the threat. The one thing that you must have in this room is a phone that can be used to call the police. If there are no first responders coming, you'll also want to include bottled water, food, toiletries, a radio, a toilet, lighting, first aid kit and some self-defense weapons at a minimum.

## Tips to Survive a Home Invasion *(continued)*

- **Find a Tactical Position.** If you're adequately armed, take up position in the corner of your safe room that is on the opposite side of the door. This will provide you with the maximum amount of time and strategic space to determine if you're going to shoot in self-defense. If an intruder busts through the door, this tactical position will ensure that you're the last thing they see, because they'll first need to make an assessment of the entire room before making a move. If you called the police and it happens to be the police entering the room, you'll already know it because they will have announced it. If it's a bad guy, you'll only need to determine if you're going to shoot.
- **Stay Put.** Remain in your safe room and do not leave under any circumstances while the threat lasts. Even if you're armed, resist the urge to confront the invaders single handedly. Despite what you see in the movies, there's typically no glory in going out in a blaze of glory.
- **Stay Put Some More.** No matter how long it takes, until first responders or other dependable backup arrives, stay in your safe room. Even if you think the threat is over and the intruders are gone, do not leave the safe room yet. You can't be 100% certain that more bad guys aren't lying in wait to take your family by force, hold them hostage, or worse. Lay low until the house is cleared and you get the definitive "all clear."

### If you don't make it to your safe room...

If you're going about your day and suddenly come face-to-face with a home invader who's just as surprised to see you as you are surprised to see them, you should try to remain calm, comply with their demands, and try the following:

- **Play Dumb.** It might be difficult, but it may just keep you safe. A home invader may be willing to play along and pretend they're in the wrong home, then leave. Since many burglaries are crimes of opportunity, the burglar may not want to risk getting a heftier prison sentence if caught.
- **Cooperate.** If fleeing isn't an option, try cooperating. Do what you're asked, and don't make any sudden movements. React to demands in measured ways and make an effort to inform if you need to do something like reach into a jacket pocket.
- **Stay Calm.** The calmer you are, the easier it will be to identify any tactical advantage. For example, try to keep distance or furniture between you and the intruder because space is a tactical advantage.

If none of these methods work, get ready to defend yourself, and have the peace of mind that you did everything possible to de-escalate the situation.







# Legitimate Defense

**2263** | The legitimate defense of persons and societies is not an exception to the prohibition against the murder of the innocent that constitutes intentional killing. "The act of self-defense can have a double effect: the preservation of one's own life; and the killing of the aggressor. . . . The one is intended, the other is not."

**2264** | Love toward oneself remains a fundamental principle of morality. Therefore it is legitimate to insist on respect for one's own right to life. Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow:

If a man in self-defense uses more than necessary violence, it will be unlawful: whereas if he repels force with moderation, his defense will be lawful. . . . Nor is it necessary for salvation that a man omit the act of moderate self-defense to avoid killing the other man, since one is bound to take more care of one's own life than of another's.

**2265** | Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm. For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggressors against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility.

**2266** | The efforts of the state to curb the spread of behavior harmful to people's rights and to the basic rules of civil society correspond to the requirement of safeguarding the common good. Legitimate public authority has the right and duty to inflict punishment proportionate to the gravity of the offense. Punishment has the primary aim of redressing the disorder introduced by the offense. When it is willingly accepted by the guilty party, it assumes the value of expiation. Punishment then, in addition to defending public order and protecting people's safety, has a medicinal purpose: as far as possible, it must contribute to the correction of the guilty party.

**2267** | Recourse to the death penalty on the part of legitimate authority, following a fair trial, was long considered an appropriate response to the gravity of certain crimes and an acceptable, albeit extreme, means of safeguarding the common good.

## **Excerpts from *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd Edition***

Part 3 - Life in Christ

Section 2 - Then Ten Commandments

Chapter 2 - You Shall Love Your Neighbor As Yourself

Article 5 - The Fifth Commandment



# Situational Awareness

One of the most effective ways to improve your personal safety is by practicing everyday situational awareness – the ability to identify, process, and understand what is happening around you, while calmly considering ways to prevent or mitigate potentially threatening situations. This requires staying alert, drawing upon your unique set of experiences and skills to evaluate your environment with a proactive and flexible mindset. It's honed through practice.

The following are some tips to help you improve your situational awareness. Practice them in all environments throughout the day including work and public spaces until they become second nature. Keep in mind that no two situations are the same. Each environment provides a unique set of conditions that will challenge your ability to adapt, so the more you practice the better.

View each new setting as an opportunity to practice – when these tips become second-nature, you greatly increase your ability to keep yourself safe.

**Minimize electronic distractions.** Whether it's staring down at your phone to look at another silly meme, scrolling through the sports scores, streaming video, or listening to music with your ear buds, your electronic devices can distract you to the point that you don't have the slightest clue what's going on around you.

Only use your devices when necessary, and only after you've determined you are in an area or situation where it is safe to do so. Stay aware of your surroundings, look up regularly, re-scan your environment and pay attention to any changes. If you're using ear buds, set the volume as low as possible (this will also help preserve your hearing) and consider using only one bud to keep the other ear open to your surroundings.

**Scan your surroundings.** If you're like most people, you probably scan new situations or environments automatically but don't always focus on the most useful information. Start noting exits, barriers, suspicious objects and people, and any other unique elements that could be of importance to your safety. Don't be complacent in an environment such as your workplace, church or favorite eatery just because it's familiar.

**Use your peripheral vision.** Practice focusing on something while also observing what's happening at the edges of your vision. This will help you detect anything out of the ordinary in an expanded monitoring range.

## Situational Awareness *(continued)*

**Locate exits.** Be aware of your exits and have an exit strategy – whether a building, car, public transportation, elevator or outdoor environment. Consider alternate methods of escape if your primary exit becomes compromised. This can also be applied to travel routes where you should be aware of any obstacles, choke points, alternate routes, etc.

**Protect your rear.** Walls and other substantial barriers are natural ways to protect your back and sides, but take care not to back yourself into a tight corner. Think strategically in order to maximize your field of vision. Consider how you may accomplish this in public places such as a restaurant, shopping mall, or park, then practice.

**Use reflective surfaces.** Your ability to maximize your field of vision in a dangerous situation will improve your ability to act. If your range of vision is limited, look for windshields, store windows, or even other people's sunglasses to detect threats you wouldn't be able to see otherwise.

**Be a hard target.** A soft target is an easy target. This is someone who is vulnerable, distracted, mostly unaware of their surroundings and has the appearance of not being ready or capable of defending themselves. A hard target is aware, prepared, and knows how to fully leverage body language. That body language exudes confidence, awareness, and capability, regardless of how you actually feel. You may feel scared, but when you broadcast to would-be threats that you are a hard target you decrease your chance of being attacked.

**Be aware of your personal space.** If someone is crowding you, displaying threatening body language, or seems suspicious in any way, scan them for subtle signs of violent intent or a hidden weapon. Increase the distance between yourself and this person. As little as five or six extra feet can provide you with a strategic advantage – that means more reaction time if you have to deal with an active threat.

**Practice visualizing.** Play out scenarios in your head beforehand. If you perceive a potential threat in your immediate space (such as a dark side alley or a blind corner up ahead) imagine how you might react to a sudden threat. Consider exits/escape routes. This kind of premeditated practice will help in actual emergencies by improving the effectiveness of your reactions and conditioning them as second-nature.

**Trust your gut.** If you sense that something is wrong or doesn't add up, don't ignore that intuition! Your instincts exist to help keep you safe. Of course you don't want to become so overly cautious that it's debilitating and you can't function, but a healthy exercise of caution can make you aware of the warning signs that can turn out to be legitimate.



## Situational Awareness *(continued)*

**Engage your senses.** There are many scenarios where it's perfectly good and healthy to let yourself relax and tune out. Since that doesn't apply to all situations, make it a practice to engage all your senses (sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste) to the fullest extent possible. Sharpen your senses. It's vital to helping you avoid unsafe situations, pick up on critical information quicker, and become better at identifying threats.

**Tell someone.** If you find yourself in an alarming situation, whether it was simply a suspicious or a verified threat, find a responsible party and let them know what you encountered. Provide as much relevant information as possible including details about suspicious people, behaviors and activities. Even if it didn't escalate to a dangerous or threatening situation, there may be elements of your experience that can help the proper authorities take action to improve the personal safety of others and eliminate the possibility of a future threat.

Although it's not possible to defend against every unforeseen danger, your personal safety begins with your ability to be aware of your environment. Not just for you, but it will benefit those around you. If you're not already in the habit, start simply by practicing at least one of these skills on a regular basis. And keep practicing! Before you know it, you will have significantly increased your situational awareness.

