

8 Things to consider before getting a firearm.



The number of applications for pistol permits is on the rise. Being able to defend yourself and your family is ultimately your responsibility, however, owning a firearm is a responsibility that takes some consideration. Before you rush out to buy the first new shiny gun you see, you should consider these tips. They will help make your buying experience easier and more rewarding.

1 - Ask yourself if you could pull the trigger.

For those of you who are considering purchasing your first firearm for self-defense and before rushing to a gun store or even looking online, please stop and think for a bit. Could you pull the trigger if you had to? Could you possibly take another human life? If you have some doubts now about whether you could potentially kill another human being should you be in a life-threatening event, those doubts will most likely be compounded and magnified in a high stress incident. Many times, people react to highly stressful situations much differently than how they anticipate. Some people may “freeze up”, hide, or run. The whole “fight or flight” thing kicks in. Unfortunately for many people, they don’t know how they will react until the event is happening. Any doubts now, are a good indicator of what you might do in those situations.

2 - Determine the purpose for wanting a firearm.

Do you want a pistol that you can carry concealed for self-defense? Are you looking for a firearm just to have at home? Depending on your answer, the type of firearm will vary. There are pros and cons to each type of firearm, so YOU will have to determine which is best for you. Pistols are obviously much easier to conceal. Rifles are better for shooting at a distance. Shotguns are the most versatile for home defense. Determine what you need and what will work for you based upon your situation.

3 - Take a firearms safety course.

Take a firearm and/or hunter safety course or a concealed weapons class, even if you don’t intend to carry concealed. This will give you a better understanding about the responsibility to having a firearm. There are many great courses offered through the NRA, USCCA and local instructors. In many states, you will not have held a handgun before obtaining your permit. Get the training ahead of time to be more comfortable for when that time comes.

4 - Decide which firearm is right for you.

Firearms come in many different sizes (lengths, weights, and calibers), you need to do some homework and talk with other gun owners to see what works best for you. Purchase the firearm that you feel will best suit your needs. Purchasing a firearm that someone else recommends may not be the best for you. If the firearm is too heavy or too big, you might find you won't carry it as much, which defeats the purpose if your goal is to carry concealed.

5 - Try to stick with a new firearm for your first purchase.

While there are plenty of quality guns that are used and obviously cheaper, there are also plenty of unscrupulous dealers out there. There could be issues or problems with the firearm that you are not aware of. The issues could be small enough that the untrained eye would not notice them. So, until you have more experience and know what to look for, I would stick to getting something brand new.

I understand money can be tight for a lot of folks. If you decide to buy a used firearm, make sure it is from a person/dealer that you trust.

6 - Stick with a common caliber.

Purchasing a firearm with a common caliber (ex: 9mm) is better for first time firearm owners. 9mm and .22 caliber are the most cost-effective rounds for practicing and working on basic shooting skills.

7- Find an instructor to train you.

Finding an instructor to train you is important. Don't think you can "manage" by yourself. A mistake with a firearm can cost you a life (maybe even yours). There are many great qualified firearm instructors available. Do some research, make your decision based on whom you feel most comfortable.

8 - Securing the firearm.

You will be responsible for the firearm and need to seriously consider where that firearm will be stored when not on your person. Depending on the reason for wanting a firearm, securing them may be different. If you are looking to just go to the range and be part of different competitions, then storing your firearm in a safe will work. However, if your reasons are for self-defense, then you need to look at options for bedside lock boxes. There are a variety of firearm storage boxes available. Do some research and ask other firearm owners.

Now What?

So, you have decided to move forward with this decision. Now the question is where to start? Research some local gun shops to see if there are any firearm safety courses being offered. The bigger, box stores will usually have some, however, they are usually taught by an owner of a locally owned store. The advantage to taking the class at a local gun shop is the ability to make a connection for future purchases, questions and training. Like most everything else, it is sensible to get the basics down correctly before charging ahead and developing bad habits. Let's first develop good fundamental safety skills before even putting a firearm in your hand. If you already have your new firearm but feel uncomfortable with it, look for our next handout regarding tips for after you purchased your new firearm.

Our mission at Beyond The Range is to help build the confidence of firearm owners, which is important in developing the skills of shooting and decision making. If you have any questions, feel free to reach us through our website at www.BeyondTheRange.net