

Different types of handgun “Action” explained.



Are you new to handguns? Confused about "Action" types?

Here is a brief explanation.

Handguns, also known as pistols or revolvers, come in various action types, referring to the mechanism by which the firearm operates and cycles through the process of loading, firing, and ejecting spent cartridges. Here are some common handgun action types:

1. **Single Action Only (SAO):**

- In a single-action handgun, the trigger performs a single function: releasing the hammer or striker to strike the firing pin.
- The shooter must manually cock the hammer or striker before the first shot to fire the firearm. A SAO revolver will require manually cocking the hammer for every shot. Whereas a SAO semi-automatic will require it only on the first shot due to the firing cycle (recoil) automatically cocking the hammer back for the next shots.

2. **Double Action Only (DAO):**

- DAO handguns have a consistent, longer trigger pull for every shot, as the trigger both cocks and releases the hammer or striker.
- This design is often chosen for its simplicity and safety considerations.

3. Single Action/Double Action (SA/DA):

- SA/DA handguns combine both single-action and double-action capabilities.
- The first shot is fired in double-action mode with a longer trigger pull, while subsequent shots are fired in single-action mode with a shorter, lighter trigger pull.
- This design provides the option for a more precise shot after the first round.

4. Striker-Fired:

- Striker-fired handguns use a striker mechanism instead of a hammer. The firing pin is partially cocked, and pulling the trigger completes the cocking process and releases the striker to fire the round.
- These guns often have a consistent trigger pull for every shot, similar to DAO handguns.
- Examples include the Glock, Smith & Wesson M&P, and the Heckler & Koch VP9.

5. Revolvers:

- Revolvers, while not strictly classified by "action type" in the same way as semi-automatic pistols, have their own unique mechanisms.
- They can be single-action or double-action, and the cylinder rotates to bring a new round into the firing position.
- Examples include the Smith & Wesson Model 686 (double-action) and the Colt Single Action Army (single-action).

Understanding these handgun action types is crucial for firearm enthusiasts and owners, as it influences factors such as trigger control, safety, and the overall shooting experience. When purchasing a new firearm, it is important to understand which "action" you prefer to have.

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