

# Concealed Carry Techniques and Concepts

by Kingpin

Why carry a weapon? The primary purpose of carrying a weapon is to protect yourself or your loved ones.

For this purpose it is vital that a few conditions are adhered to.

1. The weapon must be readily accessible and usable
2. The weapon must be effective
3. You must be familiar with the operation of the weapon
4. As few people as possible must know about the weapon.
5. The weapon must be accessible to be useful.
  - a. If you can't get to your weapon, it is useless to you.
  - b. The dinky little North American Arms .22 magnum revolver is wonderfully light and small, and may save your life, but if it is floating somewhere in the bottom of your handbag when you need it, you might as well not have it with you.
  - c. In the same way, a gun carried loosely in the waistband might be convenient and easy, but if you can't reliably grab it when you need it, you are in trouble.
  - d. In the same way, if you carry your customized colt .45 in a IWB holster, and can draw it in .5 seconds, but carry it without a round in the chamber, for 'safety', and then have an injured weak hand, and can't rack the slide, and haven't spent hours training to learn how to do it, you are in trouble.
  - e. If you are going to carry a weapon, and wish to be able to depend on it for protecting your life, you must be sure that you can get hold of it when you need to.
  - f. If the weapon is not rapidly accessible, then it might as well be left at home.
  - g. A firearm is not a security blanket. If you want to feel warm and fuzzy, carry a security blanket rather, because it will be of as much use to you as your firearm.
6. The weapon must be able to incapacitate your attacker.
  - a. Yes, pepper spray is nice to have, but would you stake you life on it?
  - b. A baton? Great, but what happens when you opponent has a gun?
  - c. A knife? Cool, but again, what do you do if there are several attackers?
  - d. A .25? Better than nothing, but unless you have the need for a really dinky gun, go for a larger caliber.
  - e. Except for special situations, the weapons most appropriate and most widely used for self-defense are pistols or revolvers shooting projectiles approximately 9mm or larger in diameter.
7. You must know how to operate the weapon
  - a. You want to carry a gun? Great, but if it is to be used in a self-defense situation, you must be comfortable with how it works.
  - b. Hitting your target
    - i. Do you practice regularly, and in practical situations?
    - ii. Do you practice with static targets at 10 meters, or can you reliably hit moving targets at varying ranges?
  - c. Clear malfunctions
    - i. If your gun malfunctions, can you automatically clear the jam and resume shooting? Can you do the same under artificially induced stress?
  - d. Weapon retention

- i. Do you practice weapon retention and disarming drills, so that your gun won't be used against you?
  - e. Pulling the trigger
    - i. Have you thought through the issue properly, and are you prepared to kill to protect you life?
    - ii. Operate the mechanism under stress?
    - iii. Can you operate the gun when you are shaking or sleepy?
    - iv. Can you operate your weapon one handed if you are injured?
    - v. Are there big safety and magazine catches on the gun?
- 8. The weapon must not be visible
  - a. In most areas it is inadvisable to show your weapon in public, for several reasons.
    - i. Panicky other people
    - ii. There are bunny-huggers anywhere you go, and the presence of a visible gun may make your life difficult.
    - iii. The open display of a gun may be illegal where you live.
    - iv. Risk of theft: If people see your gun, you may be targeted for the gun. In South Africa, a number of police officers are killed each year for their guns. By making it difficult for criminals to purchase guns, they are encouraged to steal them from those who display them openly.
    - v. Lack of surprise: If you are attacked, a gun provides a good method of turning the tables on the attackers. If they know that you have a gun, they will plan differently, so that you don't get a chance to use it.
- 9. Although there are many ways of hiding a firearm from view, most of them do not offer what is needed for practical self-defense.
  - a. Holsters
    - i. Normal, outside-pants belt holsters. It is possible to hide a firearm in an outside holster by wearing a jacket. This is however not a terribly great idea, as it ties you down to a certain mode of dress. There are nice, flat paddle holsters that work quite well. Unless you are carrying a short-barreled gun, or wear the holster very high, this option is not quite as good for concealment as the IWB holster, as the bottom of the holsters can peak out from under your jacket/shirt.
    - ii. Shoulder holsters: In the same way, a shoulder holster looks good, but they tend to become uncomfortable, and do not offer a fast draw, unless you go for expensive, patented designs without press-studs. In addition, they are visible if the wind blows at the wrong moment. This is not to say that they aren't useful, but that they have several drawbacks. Shoulder holsters are easier to draw from while seated than almost any other system. I'd suggest the use of shoulder holsters for driving in dangerous areas, or for those for whom anyone else seeing the gun is not a major hassle.
    - iii. Ankle holsters: Ankle holsters provide a good way of concealing a gun from view, as they remove it from the normal view of casual observers. Their major drawback is that it takes a while to draw from them. If you need a firearm, you need it in a hurry. In addition, it is impossible to dance wearing the darn things. I'd recommend these only if you cannot wear a Thunderbelt (which offers a greater degree of concealment) or if you want to walk around the place without having to have a belt on.
    - iv. Thunderbelts (now known a SmartCarry). These holsters offer very comfortable, deep concealment. They work very well, and make it almost

impossible to detect the gun, unless you happen to be dancing really close to your partner. Some guys worry about having a gun pointing towards their pecker. Life's tough! I never wear one with a cocked SAA, and would suggest that the best gun to carry in it is either a revolver, or a DA pistol with the hammer down, but a cartridge in the chamber. The draw is quite slow, but it provides a very high degree of concealment. I carried a .38 snubby in one for every day for 3 years, and once used to it, you forget that it is even there. I would recommend this for those who need to carry a backup piece or must have absolute peace of mind about it being concealed properly. The service and after-sales backup is excellent when I have deal with the manufacturers. Their site is [www.smartcarry.com](http://www.smartcarry.com).

- v. IWB Holsters: These holsters provide a good degree of concealment and yet also are comfortable. My personal choice for a long-term concealment of a full size auto is a leather IWB holster. I use leather because Kydex is just too expensive for me, but if you can afford a good synthetic, go for it. Their advantage is that they hide the barrel down your pants, so it can't become visible. The disadvantage is that they can be more difficult to draw from than an outside holster, as they hug the side better, but this is because they conceal the gun better. You need to decide on the best option for your individual situation.
- vi. Purse/ Handbag Holster: There are some purses that come standard with a holster. These are the best type to use, as the gun is always in the same stable position. The problem with this is that handbags tend to be chosen based on how they look, and as a result, it is difficult for a lady to find a nice looking handbag that has a holster in it. It is quite simple to add a holster to an existing handbag, and so it might be worthwhile to buy a few nice handbags, and then fit holsters to them. The holster doesn't have to look pretty, but it must be able to hold the gun still. The problem with purses is that they can easily be snatched. This can be avoided by carrying them across the body. The problem is that some thieves will cut through the strap and grab the purse. There are some purses that have a steel cable imbedded in the strap that makes this impossible.
- vii. Briefcase: There are a number of briefcases with special compartments etc. Unless you absolutely cannot use another mode of carry, I would recommend against these. They are slow to draw from, and can be snatched (unless you chain them to your hand.)
- viii. Moonbag: There are several excellent moonbag holsters available. They keep the gun on you, and yet prevent others seeing it. The advantage is that it allows you to wear almost anything. They generally have a quick draw mechanism to allow you to get to the gun quickly. The disadvantage is that there are only a few manufacturers and they can be recognized. A solution is to find a normal moonbag that you like, and add in a holster to the back compartment. This slows your draw, but makes it more concealable.
- ix. String Holster: I picked this idea up from an 80's article in a gun magazine. You can easily make an IWB holster from 10 cm of string/shoelace. What you do is to make a loop that will just allow your belt through on each end. Then tie or sew the loops. If you then put both loops on your belt, and put the gun between the middle string and the

- lining of the pants, you have a quick and easy holster. This is not as nice as proper leather holsters, but is quick and easy to make if needed.
- x. Other: There are 'pager' holsters and shirts with built in holsters. I have not tried these, but they might be quite good. If it works for you, go for it.
- b. Dress Styles: It is unfortunately true that carrying a weapon in an on-body holster will force you to change your clothing style.
- i. The exception is the Thunderbelt which only requires you to wear pants, and possibly a shirt.
  - ii. With any belt-holster, it is necessary to wear a shirt of some sort. I suggest wearing a T-shirt with a loose, unbuttoned, outer shirt, , and a bush/bomber jacket (no sleeves) on top of that. This gives you good concealment.
  - iii. For an ankle holster, you need to have pants that are long enough, and are not tight on your calves; otherwise the gun can show thru. Let's get back to bell-bottoms. :^)
  - iv. Shoulder holsters require some sort of stiff material, so that the gun does not print through. I would suggest a jacket, or at least a bush jacket.
  - v. Remember : "A gun should be comforting, not necessarily comfortable." (Cooper's Commentaries)
- c. Wearing the Holster
- i. If you are using an IWB or OWB holster, you must be aware of how you move.
  - ii. Do not bend down to pick things up. Instead squat down. It hides the gun, and also keeps you well balanced. Ensure that this becomes a habit, so that you don't make mistakes.
- d. Spare Ammunition
- i. Although you are unlikely to need to reload in the majority of shooting incidents, it is advisable to carry extra ammo.
  - ii. If you are going to the trouble of concealing a gun, it takes little extra effort to add an extra magazine or speed-loader.
  - iii. In the cases when you need an extra magazine, you really need it. The only circumstances that you need so much ammo is if you are confronting an enemy who can't leave the area for some reason (you are in the way), or who has a incredibly good reason for needing to kill you. In both cases, you will have to shoot until you eliminate the threat.
- e. Practice: Make sure that you practice drawing from the dress that you wear.
- i. Drawing from under a jacket from an IWB holster can be a lot more difficult than drawing without the jacket.
  - ii. In addition, practice reloading from under the jacket.
  - iii. Make sure that you can reliably get your weapon out, and still prevent others taking it from you.
  - iv. Practice with other people to learn what to do if someone grabs for the gun.
- f. Conclusion
- i. With any holster system, you need to analyze your needs, and see if the holster will fulfill them.
  - ii. Always evaluate the holster on how securely it holds the gun, how easily you can access the gun, how well it hides the shape of the gun, and how comfortable the holster is for you. When you find one that is acceptable in all of these categories, you have found the holster for you. It is a good

idea to have several types of holsters, but when you carry the gun, use the same holster as far as possible.

- iii. It is best to learn one draw-stroke and be consistent. You don't want to reach for your gun in wrong place in a gunfight.
- iv. If you are going to carry a concealed weapon (or any weapon for that matter), you must make sure that you are competent with the gun. In addition, you must choose your dress and holster so that they are comfortable.
- v. Finally, you must be aware of the responsibilities you have to protect those around you, and to keep your weapons safe from criminals.

Happy Hunting

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<http://www.alpharubicon.com/leo/ccwafkingpin.htm>