

What to Expect: When the Shooting Begins

Sunday, 25 November 2012 03:00 Written by Michael Hill

What if the prepper's worst nightmare has come true? The country has descended into total anarchy. All government infrastructures have collapsed, leaving the populace without police protection. Groups of bandits roam at will and are openly committing every heinous act imaginable. You are armed and out in the open, when two bad guys jump out from behind cover and aim their weapons in your direction. What should you expect to happen when the shooting begins and, what can you do now to prepare for it?



Physiologically

Generally speaking, the human psyche takes extreme offence at being threatened. Upon recognition of a serious threat, the brain sends emergency response signals to certain parts of the body. One such signal causes adrenalin to be pumped into the heart, elevating the heart rate to pump more blood throughout the body. Another signal causes respiration to climb, creating higher amounts of oxygenated blood to be sent to the brain for sharpness and to muscles for a burst of strength and stamina. The eyes focus on the threat and the ears become more astute to surrounding sounds. These functions are preparing the body for the brain's decision to either fight, or take flight.

Unfortunately, the longer it takes the brain to make that fight or flight decision, bad things begin to happen. As the higher levels of oxygenated blood start to over saturate the brain, the mind becomes confused and sluggish. Vision becomes tunneled and fails to scan for additional threats. Hearing becomes impaired. The muscles begin to quiver as an after effect to the adrenalin dump, causing fine motor skills to react like a big bowlful of Mr. Cosby's favorite gelatinized dessert. In short, your body has just become your second worst enemy. And your first worst enemy is going to take advantage of that situation... and kill you.

Normal human reaction time between the eyes seeing a situation, to the mind processing the information and then the body taking some form of action is around three seconds.

Psychologically

Exactly, what is it that sets you apart from your attackers? You are carrying around some psychological baggage, such as morals and a conscience. You have no desire to inflict harm on others. You appreciate life and you respect others and their property. These traits, though commendable under civilized conditions, may make you hesitate to respond with the appropriate amount of force necessary to respond to a deadly force threat. Or, you may be a little naive to the extreme seriousness of the threat, making you hesitate to act / react quickly, while you attempt to analyze that seriousness (i.e. think too much and act too little).

The bottom line is, you may have just added a few more seconds to your reaction time, in which case... Time's Up!!! Game's over. Next contestant, come on down.

The bad guys, on the other hand, have already made and set into motion a plan of action which has obviously pushed aside any faculty of conscience.

Important Things to Know

Note: To (I hope) avoid any heated rebuttals regarding official statistics detailing police shootings; generally, quoted statistics on the subject are published annually by the FBI, in the form of their "Officer Killed Summary." The two operative words here are officer and killed. The FBI does not maintain a database regarding the mechanics of armed confrontations where officers survive, or confrontations involving armed citizens.

With this in mind...

While FBI statistics show distances involved in officer related shooting deaths at within ten feet, non FBI studies have recorded surviving officer and surviving armed citizen shootings occurring out to about twenty feet. It is realistic, then, to conclude that when up close and very personal, the element of surprise is more of a winning factor over threat recognition and reaction time. The more distance between you and a bad guy, the greater the opportunity you might have to prepare and respond and, with greater accuracy.

The majority of armed confrontations occur in low light or under dark conditions, when the higher percentages of "lowlives" feel particularly bold. Although, it is probably safe to assume after TSHTF, said lowlives will have no continued fear of light or of being identifiable. So, don't feel a particular time of day will be better or worse in terms of safety.

Statistically, the handgun is the preferred bad guy weapon of choice, followed by tactical styled rifles, and then shotguns. It is most likely that in a TEOTWAWKI kind of world, rifles and shotguns would be the weapons of choice since the need to conceal a weapon would be pretty much a problem of the past. One also needs to consider the psychological impact presented by tactical style rifles and shotguns.

Generally, the people who have performed best in armed confrontations were the ones who could maintain psychological and physiological control of themselves; such as controlling their breathing, forcing down panic, and having the ability to control their fight over flight response. Likewise, those who have taken the time to think about what they would do if attacked and those who have played out various scenarios in their heads, are found to be better prepared to take action with little lag time.

Getting Beyond the Psychological

When you opted to become a prepper; you decided, come what may, you are going to ride out the catastrophe du'jour and emerge a survivor. To that end, preppers have to consider encounters with bad guys as a very real possibility. Only a very select few preppers will have a retreat

location so remote that it will afford them complete and total isolation. Therefore, with the odds stacked in favor of your having a deadly force encounter with some lowlife bad guys, it's vital that you get your morals and conscience wrapped around your use of deadly force responses.

Conscience is a judgment of intellect that distinguishes right from wrong. So then, isn't it just as right for you to defend yourself using deadly force as it is wrong for others to initiate deadly force against you?

And, the Physiological

Once you can mentally accept the decision to prepare yourself to use deadly force as self-defense, it's time to work on getting your physical self into the act. Reflexes are made up of combined mental and physical reactions, to given stimuli, generally perfected through repetition. For example; while driving, you see a traffic light change to red. Your brain processes the information then directs the particular muscle group to depress the brake. And the brain continues to instruct the muscle group as to how much pressure to apply and for how long. It is a simple act we perform anytime we drive. As long as nothing interferes with the transition from the moving to the stopping of your vehicle, you executed a predictable reflexive response to a fairly predictable situation.

Deadly force attacks, on the other hand, are not predictable. And they are not something most will typically perfect a reflex reaction to, unless they are the victim of repetitive attacks. So, what can you do to help you better prepare, mentally and physically, for a shooting encounter?

Reaction Training Exercises

Note: The dry-fire technique is more safely performed with the aid of a training type or replica firearm. If you opt to use a real firearm, extreme caution is advised. Take all safety precautions to insure your weapon is unloaded and that you have no ammunition nearby during your training sessions. Further, when using a real firearm, it is recommended that you use dummy ammunition (Snap Caps) to avoid damage to the firearm.

The visualization technique requires little more than a creative mind, yet it can help you build a reactive mindset. These exercises can be used at any time by creating mental scenarios of attacks and how you would respond to them. You can also practice in public places as others move toward and away from you. Again, using your imagination, as people move within a five to seven foot radius of you, merely imagine them presenting a deadly force attack and what you would do to counter it. Change it up a bit by imagining the attack comes from behind or from a hallway, doorway or alley. Or imagine the attacker is using a knife or ball bat.

Though this training exercise appears extremely lame at face value, it does in fact help prepare one mentally to be more cognizant of their surroundings, the potential for threats that may be presented and the best responses.

To best utilize dry-fire exercises, pick a television show and the show's primary character. Every time that person comes on screen, draw your training arm and fire three shots to that person's head. Do this while maintaining good control of your sights. As you gain speed recognizing the target, processing the information, bringing your sights on target and getting the three shots off, then it's time to move on to a secondary character. Generally, the personality in the lead role receives a few extra seconds of camera time over their co-stars. Graduating to co-stars, or even third tier actors, is how you measure your progress.

When you reach a point where the exercises become too easy, throw in some creativity. Set a piece of furniture between you and the TV and use it as "cover" to move behind before drawing the training weapon to shoot. Or, you can move a half step to one side, (alternating sides each time)

bending slightly at the knees then draw and fire. Being imaginary, it can be as simple or complex as you want to make it.

Role Playing

The role playing training technique requires two or more participants, and again, training firearms. (Airsoft and paintball guns are a perfect choice here, but under no circumstance use real firearms.) In role playing training, participants alternate roles between being the good guy(s) and the bad guy(s). In the best planned scenarios, “good guy(s)” are only given minor instructions to follow, which will lead them into a surprise attack or “ambush.” (not the where or how) Creativity can be used here, for example, by designating someone (without the knowledge of the good guy) to portray a panicky innocent bystander or a “good Samaritan” coming to help. The idea here is to go for more complexity in order to put additional stress on the good guy participants.

Artificially Induced Stress

In years gone by, as police firearms trainers began to learn more about the mechanics involved in shooting incidents, particularly the effects of situational stress on thinking and motor skills, it became apparent that they needed a means of creating stress during training, so that their trainees could learn how to control it. Some of the first attempts involved trainers using flashing lights, sirens, yelling / screaming and low light levels to simulate what might be a typical street scene during a shoot-out. After one or two turns through, trainees pretty quickly learned to just shut it out and concentrate on their basic shooting skills.

In recent years, trainers started using a much better technique by having the trainees run in place for sixty seconds, (to increase the heart and respiration rates) then immediately drop down for twenty push-ups (so the arms would present results similar to the after effects of an adrenalin dump) and then immediately stand and engage the target.

Incorporate this into your training exercises to get a real feel of the type of stress encountered in a shootout, as well as, what it will take for you to work through it.

Other Avenues of Training

What I have presented up to this point are training techniques that you can work on at your own place, time, and pace without investing much money. For what I consider to be a fairly significant cost, (well over a thousand dollars) you can attend professional training courses at schools like Front Sight Academy, Gun Sight, or Thunder Ranch. Generally, courses in handgun, rifle and shotgun are not combined, so transitioning from one to the next will incur additional expense. Project Appleseed is fairly inexpensive but, is strictly involved with rifle marksmanship.

There are private gun clubs that are set up for training / competition in handgun, rifle and shotgun (or all three together) in practical, defensive, and tactical disciplines. The investment would involve the cost of a membership and the ammunition required for training.

Of course, taking classes in the various martial arts can provide excellent training in both the physical and mental aspects of dealing with attacks and response.

The bottom line is; once you have your head wrapped around the fact that the best defense against deadly force is with deadly force, the next step is to train your mind and body to react in a manner that is going to bring you out the winner. And practice a lot to maintain the edge.

Please read the second article in this series - [What to Expect: After Lethal Force is Used](#).

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Cyclops,

Another great article. Thank you for your contribution.



Monday, 26 November 2012 08:36 | posted by [Dogalpha](#)

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Thanks, Well written and needed information!



Tuesday, 27 November 2012 12:06 | posted by [jason a](#)

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Really good ideas. We do alot of these exercises already, but the reacting to the tv is a truly magnificent idea. thanks.



Tuesday, 27 November 2012 15:27 | posted by [Prepper Link](#)

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Thank you for the spelling corrections.



Thursday, 29 November 2012 01:33 | posted by [reverse cell phone lookup](#)

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Because I site possessor I believe that the content material here is rattling fantastic , appreciate it for the hard work.

You need to keep it up forever! First-class Luck.

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