



Gun Ownership GUIDE

Choosing a Firearm

Deciding which firearm is right for you can take a great amount of consideration. Since your new tool should be suitable for the activities for which you plan to use it, it is crucial to ask yourself why you need a firearm before beginning your search.

WHY ARE YOU ACQUIRING A FIREARM?

The first question you should ask yourself is, how will you use your firearm? Are you planning to use it for hunting, protection or leisurely shooting?

There are many good reasons to be a responsible owner. Your entire family can feel confident knowing they can defend themselves in case of threats in your home. Other great reasons to own a firearm include the amount of fun and pride you can feel after a successful hunting trip or a relaxing weekend at the firing range.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR FIREARM

If you have decided on the type of weapon that fits your needs, it's time to research. Thoroughly read all the features that are laid out by the firearm manufacturer. It is important to know everything about a firearm before you acquire it. It will give you a head start on safety, which is extremely important.

You also should take a trip to your local firearm dealer to get to know your new weapon in person. See how it feels to you when it's actually in your hands. Is it light enough that you feel you can comfortably manage it?



Also, ask your dealer about the price of ammo for the specific model and what kind of ammunition capacity it features. Inquire about the amount of recoil the firearm produces. A strong recoil can

greatly impact your aim if you are unable to hold the weapon steady.

BE HONEST WITH YOUR DEALER

Your local firearm dealer

will have your best interest in mind when it comes to fitting you with a suitable weapon. Let him know about your experience with firearms and your intentions.

The dealer will be aware of

models rated for beginners and those that are meant for more advanced firearm enthusiasts. Being honest ensures that you will end up with a safe yet effective option.

Reasons to Acquire a Firearm

Depending on who you ask, firearms can be considered works of art that should be collected, a great tool for protecting yourself and family, or a way to blow off steam at the range or the hunting club. There are many different reasons to buy a firearm.

PROTECTION

Our families and property are very important to us. Owning a firearm gives you a huge advantage in case of a break-in or other threats on your property.

A firearm will provide you with a way to defend yourself in case of an emergency, but it also is important to become familiar with your state's laws on using a weapon for protection.

Be sure you understand the laws to make sure you can defend yourself in that regard. Take a firearm-safety class in your area to get a good explanation of the sometimes-confusing laws.

HUNTING

There is something special about spending a day in the wilderness and hunting your own food. It gives us insight in how our ancestors lived before the ease of walking into a grocery store and purchasing quality meats.

Before you purchase a firearm, decide on which game you are interested in hunting. For instance, if you plan to hunt small game such as rabbits or squirrels, you may benefit from using a .22 rifle rather than a shotgun. A .22 requires more precision, but a well-placed shot can help you get more meat from smaller game. Save the shotgun for larger game such as deer, elk or bears.

COLLECTIBLES

Some of us are so enthralled by the rich history of firearms in the country that we own them just for the fun of



The Federal Bureau of Investigation reported a record number of more than 24 million firearm-related background checks in America in 2016. While different firearm owners may have their own unique reasons for acquiring one, this number shows that many Americans have a need for weapons.

collecting.

Even "rare" firearms may not be worth much money but can be valu-

able to an enthusiast depending on why it's rare and the particular weapon's history.

Another aspect that draws collectors is the overall workmanship that went into a weapon's production.

Firearm Safety

There is an incredible amount of responsibility that comes with owning a firearm. The sad truth is that accidents happen. Sometimes these accidents can be completely avoided, so it's vital that you learn how to do your part.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Children are naturally curious and can be influenced by video games, television shows and movies that may give them an unrealistic impression of how firearms should be used.

That's where parents come in.

Your first line of defense in keeping your children safe from firearms is to keep your guns hidden. Be sure that the only way to gain access to your weapon's location is to have a key. This key should be kept in a different area than your firearm and the ammo. Also, be sure to keep your weapon unloaded and keep the ammo in a separate location.

Restricting access to your firearms is the first step in protecting your child from dangers in your home, but you also need to educate them on the risk of weapons if they come across one outside your home. Your child may come across firearms at their friend's homes or other areas in your neighborhood. Teach your children to never touch a firearm and tell an adult upon finding one.

KEEPING YOURSELF SAFE

As a responsible firearm owner, you have likely taken safety classes, been properly

licensed and are completely comfortable handling a weapon. Remember, accidents can happen. The National Rifle Association has laid out helpful tips to keep yourself safe, no matter your level of experience.

- Keep the weapon unload-

ed until it's ready for use;

- Only use the recommended ammo for your specific firearm;
- Wear proper ear and eye protection when firing; and
- Never use performance-altering substances while shooting.



CLEAN IS SAFE

Keeping your firearm clean is crucial to keeping it operating safely. Regular cleaning also will ensure an extended life and help maintain the weapon's value.

If you plan to use a firearm that is not regularly used, be

sure to clean it before you fire. A weapon in storage can accumulate a dangerous amount of moisture and dirt, preventing it from operating properly.

Before cleaning, be sure the firearm is unloaded and no ammo is present in your cleaning area.

Obtaining a Permit

Acquiring a firearm requires a thorough background check, and in some states, may even involve participating in a training and testing course. Qualifying requirements will differ by state, but there are federal regulations every American must obey to become a registered firearm owner.

THE BACKGROUND CHECK

A comprehensive background check is required by federal law to obtain a firearm license. With today's technology, these checks are performed very quickly and are generally non-intrusive.

These checks are strictly utilized to determine whether you fall into a category of people deemed by the FBI to be unfit to purchase a gun. A few of these categories set in place by the FBI are:

- **Criminal convictions:** Crimes that carried a sentence of over one year, or a misdemeanor that carried a sentence of over two years;
- **Mental health:** Being clinically diagnosed as mentally ill;
- **U.S. citizen:** Illegally residing in America or renouncing your US citizenship; and
- **Restraining order:** Having an order of protection issued against you.

SAFETY COURSES

Some states require a safety course be completed before you can successfully obtain a firearm license. Even if it's not required, you should still consider enrolling, especially if you're new to firearms.

These courses feature training on how to get the most

out of your firearm by properly treating and using it. You also will be shown basic rules to follow and proper shooting technique.

One good way to find a government-approved safety course in your area is to check with your local police department or the professionals at

your local firearm store.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Again, it is crucial that you follow your state's individual laws on acquiring a firearm by checking with local officials. There are a several different secondary actions you should be prepared to take.

Many states will require you to be fingerprinted at your local law enforcement office. This will place you in a database as a registered firearm licensee.

You also might be required to pay a fee to obtain your license, so be sure to check your state's laws.

Even if it's not required, you should still consider enrolling in a safety course, especially if you're new to firearms.



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The Shooting Range

Familiarizing yourself with your firearm is the best way to be prepared for situations which require you to use it. A controlled environment such as a shooting range is one of the best places to hone your craft.

IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE

Much like any other activity, practice makes perfect. When it comes to shooting, perfection is necessary. A situation might arise which requires immediate use of your firearm. Whether it be a threat or spotting the large deer you have been hoping for on a hunting trip, knowing your firearm's strengths and weaknesses will ultimately influence the final result.

With enough practice, you will likely enhance your shooting form and posture, which will boost your confidence. Having confidence in yourself and your firearm is extremely important for a safe, successful experience.

Another important aspect of shooting practice is ensuring the proper operation of your firearm. Any type of imperfection in your gun should be immediately addressed by a professional.



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SHOOTING RANGE TIPS

There are important rules to remember before you make your first trip to the range. As with any activity involving firearms, safety is key. Make sure to bring ear and eye protection. Some ranges may supply these for you, but it's best to be prepared.

Never point your firearm

near an area where another shooter is present, and stand at least 2 yards behind shooters if you are not shooting.

Be sure to ask for a reference book when you arrive to the range so you can understand what is expected from you during your shooting experience. Most shooting

ranges require you bring your firearm in an enclosed case, so be sure you have a suitable case.

INDOOR OR OUTDOOR

If you have the luxury of having both indoor and outdoor shooting ranges in your area, there are pros and cons

to both. Here are a couple of the positive features each offers.

Indoor Benefits

- Most indoor ranges are equipped with moving targets which will give you a good feel for close or long range targets.
- There are typically no time

limits to the bay you are using.

Outdoor Benefits

- Outdoor ranges typically are longer, which means you can easily practice with shotguns or rifles.
- You likely will be able to place your own targets to practice in different situations.

Background Checks

The Federal Bureau of Investigation began utilizing the National Instant Criminal Background System as an effective way to instantly scan a database showing whether citizens can acquire a firearm.

This system has been in use since 1998 and has since performed more than 230 million background checks, resulting in more than 1.3 million denials.

The NICS is located in Clarksburg, W. Va., as part of the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Service Division. It features a toll-free telephone number or an Internet-based electronic search in order to perform instant background checks. This incredible system allows background checks to be performed 17 hours a day, seven days a week.

HISTORY OF NICS

NICS was mandated under the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, which was incepted in 1993. This new law was named after Bill Brady, an assistant to Ronald Reagan, who was the victim of a gunshot during an assassi-



nation attempt on Reagan in 1981.

This shot permanently disabled Brady, and his death was ultimately ruled a homicide due to the gunshot 33 years later.

A result of a cooperative effort between the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the NICS was officially activated

in 1998. It has the ability to instantly recognize criteria on a potential firearm owner's record, which will ultimately result in an approval or denial.

APPEALING A DENIAL

While the NICS provides firearm salesmen accurate results of your background checks, there are still steps you may take if you feel you

were wrongfully denied. You will be able to learn the factors causing your application to be denied by contacting the FBI or state officials in writing. They will then send you a written response.

Once you are notified of the reason for denial, you can then begin the appeal process. You will be required to fill out an application in which you

can argue the accuracy of the incident on your record.

If you have no knowledge of anything on your record, it may be a case of an identity mixup. You can have local law enforcement electrically scan your fingerprint and send that to the FBI. They will be able to update the errors and give you the approval to obtain a firearm.

Cleaning a Firearm

Regularly cleaning your firearm gives you the chance to thoroughly inspect your weapon and ensure everything is working properly.

The explosion created in the chamber after you pull the trigger creates the perfect opportunity for residue to create dangerous failures. Take the time to learn proper cleaning techniques and safely maintain your firearm.

CLEANING KIT

The first step in maintaining your firearm is having access to a cleaning kit. Whether you purchase the pieces individually or choose to buy a kit, a few of the components you will be using include:

- A suitable cleaning solvent;
- Lubricant;
- A flashlight;
- A bore brush; and
- Cotton swabs.

You will need additional pieces such as patches, a cleaning rod and even a nylon brush.

UNLOAD AND DISASSEMBLY

After you have your cleaning supplies ready, it is time to make sure your firearm is unloaded. Always check the chamber. Even if you use magazines, there still may be a round ready to fire. Make sure to look through the barrel to confirm that it is empty.

For the disassembly process, refer to your firearm's owner's manual. This will give you instruction on how to gain access to every component that requires cleaning.



THE CLEANING PROCESS

First, clean the barrel of your weapon with a bore brush and a cotton patch soaked in cleaning solvent. From the back of the barrel, push the patch through with the brush and remove it.

Next, run the bore brush through the barrel a few times. This is a good

way to loosen any debris that may have been missed from the patch. Once that is done, go back to running a patch completely throughout. Repeat these steps until the patch comes out completely clean.

Once your barrel is clean, you need to lubricate. Apply a few drops of your chosen firearm lubrication to a cotton

mop and push it through. This helps prevent rust and keeps your barrel in good working order.

You also may lubricate all moving parts of your firearm's action. This is another good way to prevent rust, but experts recommend only using a small amount or it may be more prone to collecting debris.