

Podcast #169 - Home Defense Shotguns (Jeff Anderson)

Hey, everyone. Welcome back. This is Jeff Anderson, Editor for *Modern Combat & Survival Magazine* and Executive Director of the New World Patriot Alliance, with another podcast to help you better prepare for any threat you may face in your role as a protector and a patriot. Last week we went over some home defense considerations when choosing a handgun. If you missed that episode, make sure that you go back and check it out. It's episode number 168 over at *Modern Combat And Survival*.

This week we're going to be going over my number two choice for a home defense weapon—frankly, it's a lot of people's number one choice—and that's the shotgun. You also note that even though it's my number two choice for home defense, that doesn't mean that a handgun is my number one choice. It isn't. In fact, if you caught last week's episode, one of the last things I said was that a handgun is not a formidable weapon against a human-sized attacker. It's great for concealed carry, but that's only because of the limitations that you have in public with defending yourself. You can't be walking around with a shotgun out in public. Right?

That's why a handgun works. But it's not the best ideal weapon for your home, because in a home you don't have those limitations that you have out in public. You can, therefore, go with a weapon that has a lot more stopping power, like the shotgun. A handgun, multiple rounds it takes to typically stop an attacker. A shotgun you can do it with one round.

A couple of warnings here. Number one, and this is a common mistake that I see a lot of shotgun owners make, you still need a handgun. So don't confuse me just saying a handgun is not the best home defense weapon. You still are going to need a handgun, and for some obvious reason. Shotguns have far more stopping power. Right? But there's much fewer rounds that you can have for the shotgun. There's much fewer rounds you have readily available. With a magazine inside of a handgun, a semiautomatic pistol, obviously that's going to give you a lot more opportunities to send lead downrange, especially when downrange is down your hallway or in your living room. So you still are going to need a handgun.

The second warning I have for you, once again, I almost feel like I have to—I should probably start every podcast with this warning. I'm going to be making some controversial statements about my personal choice. What I say might fly in the face of what either you currently use for home defense or what you believe about home defense. Look. I'm here to give you my opinion, my expertise, my

experience. That's it. Ultimately, and I said this in the last one, whatever you choose as a weapon, one, make sure that you know how to use it. That you put the tactics behind it, because the tactics are more important than the gear. Far more important. So not matter what you choose, make sure that you can use it.

Look. Just take my advice as advice. Use it. Don't use it. Entirely up to you. What ultimately matters is that you have the weapon that you want, you're comfortable with it, you know how to operate it, and that you can put it into use to be able to protect yourself and your family.

Some of the things I'm going to say, again, fly in the face of what you'll hear "experts" out there say, or what the guy down at the gun range or the gun store, or your buddies or whatever. Again, whether it's survival, self-defense or firearms, what I typically find is that most people are just regurgitating the same stuff that they have heard out there, and they take it as gospel advice.

I'm going to give you some alternative options and alternative views on the home defense shotgun. Take it for whatever you want. But I am going to ask you to keep an open mind. So just because I'm going to give you some controversial options here, don't necessarily dismiss them because they're not mainstream.

Before we get started, don't worry about taking notes because I've already done it for you. This week you're also going to get a special bonus, our combat shotgun special report, that you can pick up for free. All you have to do is go over and grab the show notes and the cheat sheet and the special report. It's all waiting for you at www.mcsmagazine.com/169.

Let's go ahead and get started. We're going to be talking about the selection of what type of a shotgun is best for home defense. Emphasis on the "is". It can be, depending on your perspective after you get done listening to me.

I want you to right now picture in your mind the typical home defense shotgun. Just picture that in your mind. Most likely you're looking at—or if you're thinking about what model that might be, you're thinking of a 12-gauge shotgun. That's the most common shotgun out there, especially for home defense or for military, for law enforcement and things like that. The 12-gauge is kind of like the king of shotguns.

Well, it's not my ideal home defense shotgun. Personally, I use a 20-gauge shotgun. Why would I use a 20-gauge versus a 12-gauge, when 12-gauge is obviously the kind of all shotguns? Well, for a lot of reasons actually. I think that a lot of people really just kind of solidify it in their mind, because everybody uses a 12-gauge that's what you should use.

Think about it. A 20-gauge is a much—well, not a much smaller round. It's only about half the size of lead, depending upon what you're carrying as far as loads. It's just a little bit less than half of what an actual 12-gauge is. So yeah, 12-gauge is a much bigger amount of lead that you're sending downrange, if you will. But because it is such a more powerful round, it's going to have a lot more kick to it.

A lot more kick means a few things. One, it's going to mean that a smaller shooter is going to have a harder time using it. That smaller shooter doesn't necessarily mean you, if you're a smaller person. I can tell you that with my 20-gauge, it has a lot less kick. My son can shoot it better. My wife can shoot it better. And here's the thing, I can shoot it better. Because it has much less kick to it, I'm able to get the next round on-target much faster, than if it were a 12-gauge with a much bigger kick.

The other thing I find when I see people that are using a 12-gauge shotgun, is that the kick is so powerful for them. If they're not used to it, they end up getting that flinch for their next round. What they end up doing is their second round is very often way off-target, because they're anticipating the shock of that next round, and so they're flinching and they're taking it off round. You've only got a few rounds with a shotgun, as opposed to a handgun. Every one of those is going to count. So you want to make sure that you can get that barrel right back on-target, get those sights right back on target, as fast as you possibly can.

I know a lot of people out there are saying, "But yeah, it's just a 20-gauge." It's used in a lot of youth shotguns. Well, that's true. But think about this. A 20-gauge round is just a little more than half the size and weight of a 12-gauge round, but it's still the same as two .44 magnum rounds from a handgun. Think about that. Would you go to Dirty Harry and tell him that his .44 magnum, that two rounds out of a .44 magnum, would not stop an attacker, especially if he shot a .44 magnum pistol twice at the same time? That's ridiculous. Right? A .44 magnum has amazing stopping power. But would you dismiss a 20-gauge shotgun when it's shooting out two .44 magnum rounds? No. Right?

This is one of those comparison things where people think that bigger is better. It's not always better. So the 20-gauge, I love it. Because, bottom line, the 20-gauge will always kick less than the 12, and it will handle better, and it will handle faster for the average person out there.

Let's go into the second factor in your decision for a home defense shotgun, and that is the pump action versus semiautomatic. Again, when you picture the average shotgun out there, the home defense shotgun, what do you picture? It's a 12-gauge shotgun, yes. But it's typically a 12-gauge pump shotgun. Especially

those people that love the sound of a 12-gauge racking. I'll tell you, this is one of my pet peeves, are the people that consider the racking of a 12-gauge shotgun, and scaring the hell out of a home invader, such a great sound. No. If you have a home invader in your home and they can hear you racking the shotgun, you've already given up your element of surprise.

Look. I don't carry a pistol without a round in the chamber. You should not carry a pistol without a round being in the chamber. So you wouldn't get held up at an ATM machine, or in a parking lot somewhere, and think that the racking of your pistol is going to scare somebody off. No. By the time you pull that pistol out, it's already go time. You should already have a round in that chamber. You feel that your life is in jeopardy, and it's time to pull the trigger if you have to.

The same thing goes with a shotgun. It's no different. Don't rely on the racking of a 12-gauge to be able to scare away some intruder. The other part of that is you should have already had a round inside the chamber, without even having to have racked it. So you load up the magazine tube for the shotgun, you load a round in there, then you put another round in the tube, so that you're fully loaded and ready to go when you've got to put that thing into action.

That being said, I'm not a fan of the pump action shotgun either. I prefer a semiautomatic, where you don't have to rack that next round manually into the chamber. One of the reasons why people started really, I guess, going with the pump action shotgun was really because it was manual, and you didn't have to rely on gas operated or bringing another round in there, that the firearm was going to do it itself.

Maybe some of the earlier semiautomatic shotguns weren't as reliable, and so people wanted a manual version that you could definitely count on. But I can't tell you how many times I've seen people in an adrenalized state—and this happens if you go to shooting competitions or things like that, or shoot houses and whatever—I can't tell you how many people I've seen, that are well trained on a pump action 12-gauge shotgun, that short stroke getting that next round into the chamber. So they don't pull it back all the way or they don't push it forward all the way. The round doesn't fully go into the chamber, and so they're not ready for pulling the trigger on the next round.

I know there's a bunch of people out there saying, well that's just lack of experience, that's lack of training. No. I'm saying I've seen people who you would consider experts, that are well trained, I've seen police officers do it, where they short stroke it and they're not ready for that next round.

So in an adrenalized state, remember, you don't have fine motor skills. You only have gross motor skills. With all the physiological things that are happening in your body, you can very easily short stroke getting that next round in and it's not ready to go. That's a bad scenario right there.

The semiautomatic shotguns these days are very reliable. I have never had a jam so far in my tactical shotgun and pulling that trigger fast. I can shoot much faster with it. I don't have to worry about the sights going away as I'm racking a shotgun. Again, this is a personal preference. You can use both. But I'm here to try and bring the semi-auto really far back into mainstream and make it the choice for a home defense shotgun.

I will tell you that what I personally carry for home defense—not what I carry for home defense. But what I use for home defense is a Mossberg SA-20 tactical shotgun. It's a Mossberg semiautomatic 20-gauge tactical shotgun. You can find them, or you can order them, online. You can get it from your local gun store. To me this is my dream shotgun. I saved up for this thing for a long time, I got it and I absolutely love this thing.

Let's go into the next thing, which is actually going to be another controversial topic. I'm going to get a bunch of comments on this stuff, which is good. I love debate. I love professional debate. So feel free to leave your comments on the blog.

So let's talk about ammo. You have different options when it comes to ammo for your shotgun as well. You have buckshot, which is the most common. People are using double ought buck or they're using—you're using buckshot for home defense, because the "advantage" of a shotgun is that you're able to miss your target with a little bit of fudge room in there. Because you've got the shot that's coming out and it's spreading, and it's making this shot pattern out there. So if you're a little bit off, then you've got the shotgun to be able to make up for whatever you might be missing, if it's a moving target, or it's dark, or whatever it is. So that's one of the things that people see as a benefit to the shotgun.

Some other people will use birdshot, thinking that that has an even bigger spread and it's going to basically—again, I've heard this from experts that are out there. I know a lot of you are using buckshot. Some of you are using birdshot, even though it doesn't really have necessarily the stopping power of buckshot. Can it be used? You can.

I used to use buckshot, but I am actually—after having a conversation with the late, great Louis Awerbuck about it, he converted me over to slugs. There's a lot of reasons for this. Number one, when you're using shot in your shotgun, like

buckshot or birdshot, when you're talking about distances for home defense you're not talking about all that far. You're not talking about a 20-yard shot, like you might be doing if you're out there going after a deer or something like that. You're talking about the distance across your living room or down at the end of your hallway. That's what you're looking at.

If you look at actual shot patterns on targets, at that distance you're really not getting a spread there. It's really not giving you much of a spread. So you don't have a lot of fudge room there. If you're off by that much, then you're only just going to be winging them in the side anyway with a couple of the shot. So that's one thing. It doesn't have that shot pattern that everybody thinks that it does.

The second thing is, and this was Louis' big thing to me, was you're responsible for every round that comes out of your weapon. You probably know that when it comes to a handgun out in public. But even for buckshot, you have several of these pellets that are coming out of your weapon. So when they come out, where are they going to go? Especially buckshot, those are good sized pellets that are coming out at the end of the shotgun.

So for me—in a home defense scenario, we always talk about backstop and over penetration and making sure that you don't hit a family member in the next room and things like that. With buckshot you have to account for all of those. Especially if it's hitting two-by-fours, and things like that, it can ricochet around and you don't know where all of those pellets are going to go. Especially if they go through a wall, you are going to get a bigger shot pattern out of that, because it is going to bounce off of drywall. It's going to change the trajectory. Even just a little bit can make a big difference on the other side of that. With slugs, you only have one round you have to worry about. That's it.

The other part of it is if it's a hostage scenario or something like that, you don't want—of course you're not going to try to pick somebody off, shoot them in the head with a shotgun. But either way, when there's other people that are in that close proximity, even not beyond them, you're not going to want to have any rounds going where you don't want them to go. So that's the other thing.

The other thing is stopping power itself. So yes, buckshot does have stopping power to it. Those pellets are large enough to be able to stop an attacker, and there are several of them going into the attacker. So you do have the hydrostatic shock that can create more of a cavity in the torso that can help you to be able to stop an attacker. But those slugs are going to make a big shock inside the system. That is going to really create an immense amount of damage inside of your attacker. So I strongly recommend that you use slugs.

My SA-20 is a cylinder bore, so there's no rifling in these types of shotguns. It's very common for home defense shotguns. However, since I shoot slugs, I use rifled slugs, it's really the only kind I can basically find anyway, 20-gauge rounds and slugs, they only take up a small section of the ammo shelf. When you go to even the big stores, like Cabela's or Bass Pro and things like that, you kind of have to hunt around for 20-gauge rifle slugs. That just tells me that a lot of people really are not using these for home defense or in their training and everything. So again, I'm trying to bring back the 20-gauge, I'm trying to bring back semiautomatic and I'm trying to bring back slugs as the ammo for a shotgun.

So with the rifled slugs, what that does, is since it is a cylinder bore on the shotgun, the rifling of those slugs creates its own spiral and it creates more accurate trajectory for when you're using those things.

Now let's talk about a few key accessories that you should be looking at for a home defense shotgun. There's only a few of them here that I'm going to go over. Again, go ahead and grab our combat shotgun bonus report. It's going to go a lot deeper into a lot of these and the different reasons why, and different accessories and things like that, ways to trick out your shotgun. Again, just go over to www.mcsmagazine.com/169 for the show notes and the free combat shotgun bonus report.

So let's talk accessories now. The very first thing that you want to add to the shotgun that you get is a sling. You definitely want to have a sling on it, because it's not like with a handgun where you can quickly holster it if you have to navigate obstacles, or open doors, or help a family member, or carry a family member, or anything like that. A shotgun you're going to have to, most likely, put it down. If you don't have a sling, you're going to have to put it down somewhere if you need to do any of that.

So what you want to do is you want to have a sling for it, so that you can put it over your back if you need to, if you need to navigate obstacles. You can use the sling to help keep it pointed in front of you while you're maybe holding a child or something like that. You're getting yourself out of the home, which is what you should be doing anyway. Right? So a sling is going to help you with all of that.

It can also be used for better accuracy. If you have to make a longer shot for some reason, you've got a Trump mansion, or whatever it is, you can use the sling to be able to get a more accurate shot that way. But you definitely want to get a sling for your shotgun. That's the very first thing I would buy for your shotgun is a sling.

The next thing I would add to it is a light. Look, you can't hit what you can't see. We talked about this with the handgun lights that we used before. I told you before, when it comes to a handgun I like to have my flashlight separate from my firearm. Not attached to the rail on it. Different strokes for different folks. That's just the way that I run with it. It's because of how I grip the handgun. It's because I like to have the flexibility of being able to look elsewhere that my handgun is not pointed. Things like that. But with a home defense shotgun, you're not going to have really that option, to be able to use a separate flashlight.

So you definitely want something that can be mounted to the firearm. Something that you can use so that you can—whether you are coming in from, it's a lighted area into a darker area, or if it's a nighttime home invasion or something like that, you want to be able to hit what you see and identify that it is an actual threat. For that you are going to need a light. Especially since you don't have extra rounds there, you don't want to be wasting a bunch of rounds going all over the place.

The last accessory that I'll tell you about right now is a way to carry extra rounds. Again, one of the disadvantages of a shotgun is you don't have as many rounds available for your own defense as a handgun or some other type of weapon like that. So you have to make the best use of the rounds that you do have. The best way to do that is to carry extra rounds on you in some way.

Different people use different things. You can use a side saddle, which is basically a—it will hold the rounds. It attaches to the outside of the shotgun, up near the receiver there, so you can actually mount it there and the rounds are always right there ready to go. There's a lot of different configurations that people talk about in how to use those different types of rounds, or how to manipulate them or configure them so that they're readily available. Things like that. So a side saddle is a really good option for you.

I have a belt carry, but it's a MOLLE belt carry. For me, I use a vest for home defense. That's another topic for another time that we're going to go into. But I like a MOLLE clip that I can use and have that there.

There are a lot of people—this was a really cool tip that I got from one of our readers before, was to actually buy the side saddle that you would normally attach to the shotgun, and have that in different areas of your home. I love this idea, because what he was saying was that you could put it underneath a bookcase. So if you were using the bookcase as cover, you would have extra rounds right there. Behind the bookcase you could have it. There's different places that you can hide it. Underneath a couch, mounted right underneath the couch. Look, a couch isn't great cover. But it's good concealment. If you can get

in there, you can get extra rounds there. Things like that. So I like the side saddles especially for that scenario.

But you definitely want to have some extra rounds on you that you can carry there. Again, I'm going to go back to you still want to have a handgun. I still have a handgun that I use as backup for my primary home defense weapon, because especially if you're using a shotgun, you can run out of rounds. It is more cumbersome to be able to try and reload a shotgun than it is to reload a handgun. But it's so much easier—so much easier—if you're running out of rounds and you are in the fight, to quickly switch to your handgun. Draw it out and use that instead.

So definitely make sure that you still have a handgun for home defense, even if it is acting as your backup, because you take that backup with you when you are in your home, and if you're in an actual fight inside your home scenario that's there.

So that's a quick lineup of my choices and the factors that go into my choice for the best home defense shotgun and some of the accessories. Remember, you can go and get the more detailed report, get the combat shotgun bonus report and all the show notes and cheat sheets for this episode, over at www.mcsmagazine.com/169.

Coming up next week, while I do have a shotgun for home defense, again, it's not my number one pick. Next week I'll share what my number one pick is that I'm using to protect myself and my family from a home invasion. I can almost promise you that it's not what you're thinking, but you'll have to stay tuned for finding out what that is, why I choose it and my tips on how you can use it to keep your family safe in your home. It's all coming up next week.

Until then, this is Jeff Anderson saying prepare, train and survive.