

## Is a GUN right for me?

By Jeffrey J. Santella, s.s.

If I had a dime for every time I was asked that question..... Everyone has questions and opinions on firearms. Should I keep a gun in a house with kids? Can I shoot someone who breaks into my house? How do I get a carry permit? Do I need a carry permit to have a gun in my car? Where can I shoot? The list goes on and on.

In this article, I will offer you a brief overview on this "Life & Death" topic. I will hopefully plant the seeds needed to inspire you to seek out further information on this complicated, subjective yet essential piece of our culture. Like everyone else, I also have an opinion. The difference is, I have 25 years of law enforcement experience to back me. Note: Just being an officer does not necessarily make you a gun expert. However my career has not focused on patrol. I have specialized in officer and civilian personal safety. As a Police academy instructor and the owner of a Martial Arts University, I eat, live and breathe urban personal defense tactics and strategies. A majority of this lifestyle revolves around weapons especially "GUNS"!

Let me first mention, "IT'S ALL ABOUT EDUCATION". If your not willing to invest some time and money into education. You shouldn't have a gun. Unfortunately there are no mandates for this precursor to responsible gun ownership. The result is an increasing amount of "BAD" publicity surrounding guns. Like it or not, the fine state of Florida hosts a gun show every weekend and tens of thousands of weapons are in circulation.

Let's talk "SELF DEFENSE": I haven't met a gun owner that didn't consider his / her hand gun a self defense tool. Personal defense may be the catalyst to YOUR gun purchase. But many gun owners focus more on hunting, collecting, investment or sport shooting. No matter the primary focus, everyone agrees a firearm would come in handy if someone threatened their life or the life of another. Let's get back to the key word in this message; EDUCATION. I'm not talking simply gun safety and marksmanship. There are numerous aspects to consider.

Survival mindset – Could I shoot someone to stop the threat. Am I able and willing to take someone's life. (We don't use the word KILL in the firearms industry)

Neurological factors – How can I better handle stress. Do I understand the effects of Adrenalin?

Tactical considerations – low light shooting, off hand, disarming & retention techniques, Home clearing (checking your home for intruders)

Maintenance – cleaning and lubricating

Purpose – concealed carry, home defense, travel?

Training regiment – Do I plan on practicing monthly, quarterly, yearly?

Basic weapon operation choice – Semi-Auto or revolver.

Budget - \$100 - \$1,000 plus

Gun Brand – Glock, Colt, Ruger, Smith & Wesson etc.....

Caliber choice – 25 cal., 32 cal., 380., 9mm, 10mm, 38 cal. .357 cal., 40mm, 45 cal. ....

Gun Finish – Chrome, Stainless, Blue Steel, Teflon etc

Frame size – Sub compact, compact, full size

Grip size and texture – wood, rubber, plastic

Ammunition – Hollow points, Hydro's, semi-jacketed...

Holster choice. And you haven't pulled the trigger yet!

**AND YOU THOUGHT PICKING OUT YOUR LAST CAR WAS DIFFICULT!!**

With all this in mind, how long do you think "CCW" (carrying concealed weapons) state permit classes are? 40 hours, 24 hours, 12 hours? The sad truth is some shops offer the bare minimum of discussing laws and shooting ONE round. It just takes two hours and \$35. Isn't that scary!!! This is the main reason I always carry, even to church...

Don't settle for a course that is less than 6 hours shooting 50 rounds. The good courses will double those numbers. Expect to pay \$150 +/-

If after training, you're still not comfortable with the enormous responsibility of gun ownership, you're not alone. You have a few less lethal options like Pepper spray or a "C2 Tazer"; Yes, they do make Tazers for civilians now. But if you want to hear more on the subject, you're going to have to wait until the next issue.....

\*Jeffrey Santella has been a local officer and a five county police academy instructor for over 25 years. He founded "Street Defense Inc." (now Martial Arts University) in Cape Coral in 1986, training over 10,000 officers and civilians to date. In his 30 years of Martial Arts training, he has earned 6 Black Belt recognitions and the title of "Shihan" (Master Instructor). A multi- Hall of Fame Master and a Kickboxing and Karate Champion. He can be reached at [shihan@streetdefense.com](mailto:shihan@streetdefense.com) 239-772-KICK