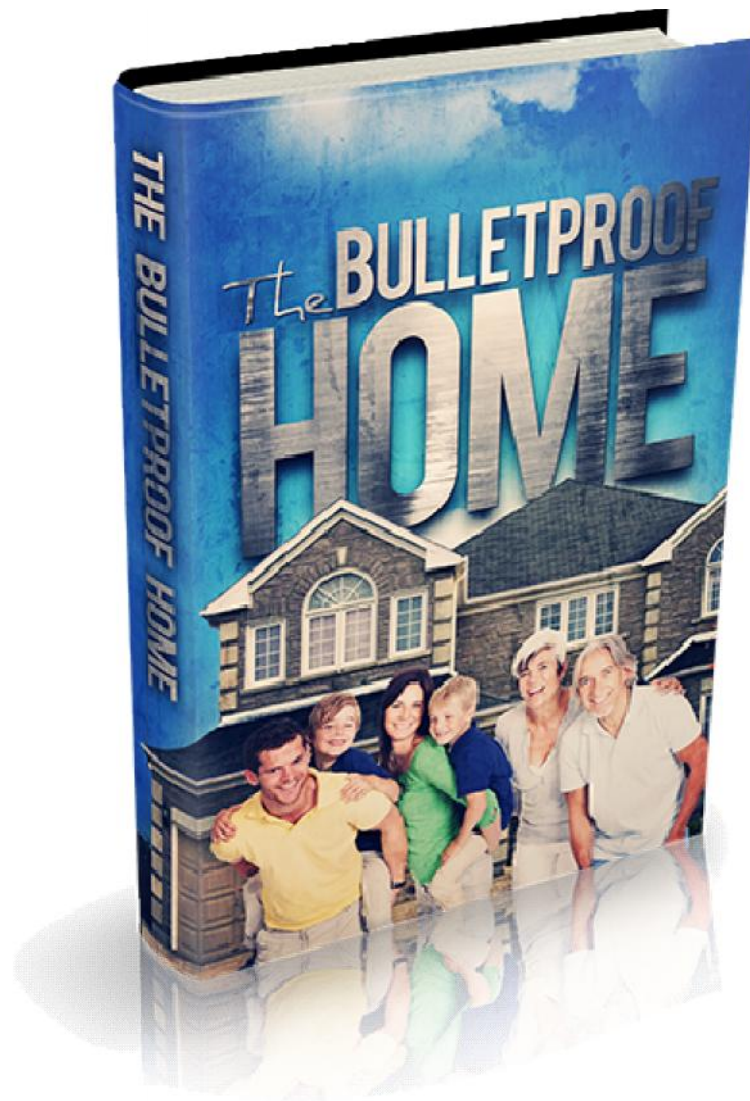


THE BULLETPROOF HOME



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1. Home Defense for Preppers

I never expected to become a prepper. In fact, I never expected a lot of things that I went through in my life. When I came back from the Vietnam War, I thought I'd be able to settle down to a nice quiet life with my family. After all, I'd put my time in and served my country; even going to war. I'd helped train up the next generation of fighters. Now it was someone else's turn. I hung up my uniform for the last time, leaving all that behind to try my hand at being a civilian.

You've got to understand; the call of duty was strong in me. My ancestors have been fighting this country's wars since my great-great-great-great-great-granddad put on an Indian suit and became one of the "Indians" in the Boston Tea Party. That's a tradition that's hard to set aside. But I figured one war was enough for me. The last thing I wanted to do was spend any more time away from my family.

So, I settled down, bought a house and found a civilian job in the town I'd grown up in. It was nice going back home, although home wasn't quite how I'd remembered it. Things were changing, and not for the better. Kids were dropping out of school, crime was up, and morals were down. It seemed like nobody cared about anything anymore. It looked to me like there were more drug addicts and gang members than there were cops to go after them. I asked myself over and over, "What is the world coming to?"

I'll have to confess that I really blew it on the house I'd bought. I grew up in an area of town that wasn't really the best. In fact, it was downright lousy. Not too far from us, there was another area that I'd always liked. I remember when I was a kid, telling myself that someday; I'd have a house in that neighborhood.

Well, with a little help from Uncle Sam, I was able to buy a house in that neighborhood, so I did. I was actually impressed with how inexpensive the houses were. I guess that should have set some alarm bells off in my head, but it didn't. Maybe when I hung up my soldier suit I'd hung up my soldier's instincts to go with

it. Boy, was that a mistake. You see, I'd just moved from one combat zone to another, without even realizing it.

The gangs were gradually taking over my neighborhood, and I didn't even know it. Oh, they were subtle about it. A lot of the obvious signs were missing. I guess if I'd seen them tagging everything, I'd have been suspicious. But these gangs had gotten smarter. They took over the area, quiet like.

There was actually a good reason for that. Instead of being the gangs of my youth, these gangs had evolved. I guess they were more like the Mafia of old; you know, back in the Prohibition days. These guys were into selling drugs, prostitution, running illegal gambling and big-time extortion. They were a criminal business, and ran it as such... corruption gone wild.

Nevertheless, they pretty much left my family and I alone. My kids were able to grow up and get married and my wife and I learned to ignore what was going on outside our doors. I became comfortable, lulled to sleep you might say. Oh, I wasn't totally asleep, I guess. I made sure that I had an alarm system set up in my home and I kept a couple of guns in my closet. But the fine-tuned senses that had saved my bacon in combat weren't there anymore. To think that a former Army officer, with combat experience could become so complacent is crazy. I had really lost my mind.

That is, I lost my mind until I got my wakeup call. You know? I would have been much happier had I not gotten that wakeup call... and I've got to say, it's really my own fault. Had I not gone to sleep about security measures, it probably never would have happened. But, I have to admit, once it did, it really got my attention.

Like I said, I had taken the basic security precautions. I had a good alarm system, with a reliable company. I replaced my front door with one that was harder to break into and put a good deadbolt on it. I took care of the back door too, doing the little tricks with the sliding glass door that everyone talks about, so that it couldn't be popped off the track. I even put grates over the basement windows, to keep people from breaking in that way. Like I said, I did the common

stuff. But you know something? That wasn't enough. Today's criminals are smarter than before. They're used to dealing with alarm systems, security doors and locked windows.

All that "normal" security stuff was worthless. When the bad guys decided to break into my home and see what they could get, all that did was make them take a few seconds longer. That's it. It didn't slow them down enough to matter. They were inside my home, stealing my stuff and attacking my granddaughter in a matter of seconds. Yep, that's right, she'd come to visit during summer vacation, and someone had apparently seen her. Shortly after I put her to bed and headed for my own, they paid us a call.

It was her scream that woke me up. I ran down the stairs to find two men in her room. That was my wakeup call, right there. I was no longer a nice civilian; I had reverted to an infantry officer back in the jungle once again. My guns were upstairs in the bedroom closet, but that didn't matter. To one who understands weapons, anything can be a weapon. I grabbed a walking stick that was leaning in the corner and went in swinging. A quick jab in the kidneys to stop her assailant, then a swing to catch him on the side of the head with the other end was all it took. He was down for the count... or at least until the police got there. That was enough to send his buddy packing. I didn't bother hitting him, as he was on his way out the door a whole lot faster than I could catch him.

Let me say something about the police here. I respect the police. They put it on the line for you and me; every day of the year. They're underpaid, overworked and most of the ones I've met are highly dedicated and motivated. But, they're losing their war and they know it. Police forces are only reactive; they can't really be proactive. Somebody has to commit a crime to put them in action. If there's no crime, they're hands are tied. That means, when you need them in seconds, at best, they can be there in minutes. That's it.

I guess I had always believed the lie that the police are there to protect us. I say it's a lie, because they can't. Oh, they try, but the laws and the courts tie their hands. They can't protect us, because they're not allowed to protect us.

You'd think that one wakeup call would be enough, but I got stage two just a few weeks later. You see, my granddaughter had come to visit because I was going on a trip. My sister was working in Egypt and she'd been bugging me to visit her for years. Well, that was the year that I decided to take her up on it and pay her a visit. It was the wrong year for that, but I didn't know that at the time.

The reason why I say that it was the wrong year is because the "Arab Spring" happened while I was there. One day, everything is nice and peaceful and the next one everything just erupted. There were demonstrations everywhere; and if that wasn't bad enough, some of those demonstrations turned violent.

I don't know if you've heard it or not, but there are a lot of Muslims who hate the United States of America. They call us "the Great Satan" of all things. As you can well imagine, it was pretty uncomfortable being in an area where chants of "kill America" were commonplace.

We had to get out of there and we had to do so quickly. I didn't know my way around well enough to do much and my sister didn't have my training. We were in trouble. Fortunately, she had a couple of neighbors that were a little more prepared than we were.

I guess you'd call these guys preppers, although I'm not used to thinking of people outside the United States being preppers. Nevertheless, I can't think of anything better to call them. Although they both seemed to be prepared for pretty much any emergency, there was a huge difference in how they were prepared. Let me explain.

The first guy, who I'll call Amir, was what I'd call a typical prepper. He had his place set up so that he could handle a disaster, along with all the "typical" defenses to take care of himself and his family. In a way, he reminded me a little too much of me, back before they had broken into my house. Just like I had done, he was depending upon the typical things to keep him safe... only, they didn't.

It didn't take too long for the mob to find Amir. An angry group of Arabs, looking for food and whatever they could find, broke into his house while we were grilling some lamb. It seems that he was a little too obvious, so they knew

who he was and where he could be found. When things broke loose it must have given them the excuse they needed to go after him. He ended up out in the street, beaten to death, while they stole everything he owned.

Just seeing that was pretty traumatic, especially with the realization that my sister and I were just a couple of houses away and I didn't have anything more serious than a kitchen knife to protect myself with.

That's where the second guy comes in. I'll call him Masud, although that's not his real name. Masud reminded me a lot of the guys I'd known in Special Forces. He was about as unconventional as you could get. He had all kinds of crazy tactics and strategies I'd never thought of. Even more important than that; his tactics worked.

Yep, he was able to get us to a friendly embassy (I don't want to mention which one) who got us out of the country. Wow, what an experience. If it wasn't for Masud, I'm not sure what would have happened to us.

1.1 My "State of the Union Address"

Let me get on my soapbox here for a minute. I guess you could say that my experience in Egypt was phase two of my wakeup call. I realized that what had happened in Egypt could happen anywhere. It doesn't matter that we live in the good old USA, there are as many crazies inside our borders as there are anywhere else in the world. All they're waiting for is an opportunity and the whole thing could blow up in our faces.

Let me tell you something, that wakeup call that I received did more than just wake me up to seeing how I needed to defend my family; it woke me up to take a good long look at society in general.

You know what I found? I found that our country is going to hell in a hand-basket. Sad to say, but this once great country, which I fought and bled for, is going down the tubes. I remember reading *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* years ago and hearing people talk about how the U.S. was on a parallel course. At that time I was skeptical; but no longer. I hate to say it, but the United States in

on a downhill slope, and the people we have in government seem dedicated to making it hit rock bottom.

There are several ways that the U.S. is going down. First of all, on a personal level, I can testify as to the moral decay of our country. I pretty much already did that. Anyone with their eyes open can see it. Conventional marriage is being bashed, while homosexual marriage is being applauded in the media.

Movie stars are lauded for giving away measly amounts of money, while entrepreneurs who give those same people jobs are vilified. States making it legal to buy marijuana over the counter and smoke it publicly (I wonder what the second-hand smoke people say about that). The list is endless. Divorce is common and schools think it's normal to have nursery care so that unmarried teen girls can go to class.

The moral state of the country isn't all that's going bad. Economically the country is going downhill rapidly and the administration and media is acting like it's okay. Currently, the government is printing massive amounts of money to keep the inflation rate down and make things "look good." There's only one problem with that. It's like covering an infection with a band-aid; when you pull the bandage off, it's only gotten worse.

That reminds me, the numbers that the government is putting out are all phony now. Part of the reason that the "official" inflation rate is so low is that the prices for food, fuel and medical care have been removed from them. The three fastest rising costs for the average family are ignored, just to make the statistics look good. It's enough to make you sick.

Speaking of medical costs; the IRS has officially stated that they expect health insurance costs for the average family to hit \$20,000 per year! Can you imagine that? Where do they expect people to come up with that kind of money from? Obamacare may just be the straw that breaks this camel's back. The country can't afford it, yet liberal politicians are still talking about how wonderful it is.

Hey, I'm as compassionate as the next guy. I believe in helping people out. But I'd rather give them a hand up, than just give them a handout. You give someone a handout, and you can be sure that they'll be back for more. You give him a hand up, and he won't need to come back for more. The problem is; this country is getting more people who expect to live by handouts, than expect to work for a living. That's going to catch up with us some day; and it won't take long.

When things fall apart, you can expect all those people who are learning how to live by handouts to be out there rioting and looting. As far as they're concerned, if someone else has it and they don't than the other guy is bad. That's dangerous thinking. It's the kind of thinking that can get people to storm your house when things go south, just because you have food and they don't.

I don't know how long it's going to take, but this country is heading for a crash. I'm not worried about a zombie apocalypse or a nuclear war; I'm worried about a financial collapse, followed by a general collapse of society. You can pretty much count on it happening that way.

History has shown that financial collapses are always followed by a societal collapse. When all those people out there realize that FEMA isn't going to be able to feed them, they'll get desperate; and you know what they say, "Desperate people do desperate things."

That's what I'm preparing for. I don't know if you've seen that show Doomsday Preppers or not. Some of those people are a bit far-out if you know what I mean. Maybe that's just because it's for television. Why should a guy in New York City be expecting the Yellowstone Super-volcano to hit his apartment building? Or how about the people who are expecting the earth's poles to shift? Maybe an EMP attack is possible, but who's going to launch it? Some of that stuff is way out there, if you ask me.

On the other hand, every year there are hurricanes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters which destroy people's lives. There is social unrest and poverty

all around us. Unemployment and the National Debt are out of control. Things are looking like we're heading for a disaster more and more each day.

That's why I'm a prepper; not to withstand the zombie apocalypse, but to withstand the mob that's going to be looking for my food stash. I want to protect my family through anything and everything that they can throw at me; because when all is said and done, they're really all I have.

I'll have to admit, I had trouble convincing my wife at first. Maybe that's because she never served in the military; I don't know. The key to convincing her was letting her see what's going on in other places. Actually, it wasn't that I convinced her so much as that FEMA did. When Superstorm Sandy happened, she was sure that FEMA would do much better than they did for hurricane Katrina; but they didn't.

Even though the mainstream media didn't report that, it wasn't all that hard to find videos on YouTube that showed people rooting through dumpsters to feed their families, two months after the storm. That's what convinced her. She didn't want to see our grandkids without food or having to do the same.

I don't know about you, but my mind is made up. I've got to do whatever I can do to protect my family. That's why I did the things in this book, and that's why I'm passing this information on to you. I hope that it will be as helpful to you, as it has to me. If this helps protect your family from any attack, than it's worth it; I'll have done what I set out to do; I'll have made a difference.

So, let's get started.

2. Defense Concepts and Strategies

Having an arsenal of weapons is great, but if you haven't got the right strategy, they're not going to do you any good. Weapons only allow you to put the hurt on any enemies if they are used in the right way at the right time. Anyone who has studied military strategy knows that winning a battle is more about setting the battle up the way you want it to go, than it is about having the best weapons. Sure, good weapons help, but good strategy is even more important.

Before any potential attack can come, you need to have your defensive plan put together. This includes how your defenses are arranged, what you're going to do to deter the enemy, how you're going to get them into your "kill box" and who in your team is going to do the shooting. A successful battle is more about good planning, than it is about good weapons.

The strategies that are used in the military today have been developed over centuries. Men (and sometimes women) have been killing one another for as long as man has been around. Modern weapons only make the job easier; they don't determine whether or not it can be done.

Having said that, the right weapons can affect your strategy; but not as much as the right terrain. You can't shoot someone at long range if you don't have a long-range rifle to use. Pistols are virtually useless past 50 feet, so unless you're as good as Doc Holliday with an attitude, don't even try. On the other hand, shooting someone two blocks down the street, just because you think that they look like a trouble maker is murder, plain and simple. So, your terrain and your weapons affect each other.

Let's talk about your goal here for a moment. As a prepper, I doubt that mass-murder is part of your plan. You probably just want to be left alone, so that you and your family can live in peace. However, that doesn't mean that others will see things that way. In a post-disaster situation, people are going to be

desperate. Even though the prepper movement is growing rapidly, it still accounts for a miniscule portion of our population.

The rest of the people out there either have their head in the sand or are expecting the government to take care of them. I guess their misplaced faith in FEMA could be considered commendable in some circles, but to me it's just foolishness. FEMA has proven without a doubt that they can't respond to a disaster well. Even after several years to plan and prepare after Hurricane Katrina, they were totally unprepared for Superstorm Sandy.

Did you know that FEMA doesn't even put out requests for quote for emergency supplies until after the disaster happens and they have the time to evaluate the need? That means that the soonest that they can respond to anything is one week; or more likely three weeks.

All those people out there, who are depending upon Uncle Sam to bail them out are going to be hungry and thirsty. Most of them are going to have kids that are hungry and thirsty as well. They'll be looking for anything they can find to feed their kids, and they won't know how to scavenge off "the fat of the land." Their first target will be the grocery stores, then looting in general. Finally, they'll start looking around for anyone who looks like they have food, with the goal of either begging or stealing what they have.

The longer the situation goes on, the more desperate those people will become. Their desperation will drive them to do things that they otherwise wouldn't think of. That includes attacking people who they even think have food. In other words... you.

That's the situation you have to prepare your home defenses for. You might have one lone person coming around to see what they can get, or you may have a mob of 30 charging your door. Either way, you've got to be ready to stop them and deter them from their intended attack.

That's the key word... deter. We'll talk more about that in a minute, but your goal is to stop them from their evil intent. It's not to kill them, or even to hurt them; it's just to stop them. Of course, killing them, or killing some of them,

might be a part of stopping them. But if you can stop them without having to kill them, you've accomplished your goal.

The other part here is to keep them from killing you or anyone in your family. You didn't do all the work of being a prepper, just so that you could die from bullets in the chest, instead of from starvation. Dead is dead, no matter how it happens. So, your whole defensive strategy is based on protecting yourself and your family; not racking up a score. Once again, killing may be part of protecting your family, but if there's any way you can avoid it, you're going to be better off.

Any potential assailants are probably not well trained or well equipped. That's to your advantage. If you had to try and hold your home against properly trained and equipped soldiers, you'd probably never succeed. Even one squad of real infantry would probably be more than you can handle, unless your name is Rambo.

Even so, you have to assume that a man holding a gun knows how to use it. He might have been in the Army or might be a hunter. He might even be someone who goes to the shooting range every once in a while, just for the pure enjoyment of shooting. So, making the assumption that they don't know what they're doing is a dangerous gamble. At least some of them are going to know enough to be dangerous.

The ability of individual attackers will become obvious with a little observation. How they hold their weapons, how they move, whether they know about cover and concealment, and even whether they can walk a straight line are all important clues to look for. Some may have had to get drunk or high to get up the nerve to come after you. If you can tell who those people are, it will help.

There is one thing that you can pretty much count on is that they will not be a cohesive military unit; they'll be a mob with guns. I say "pretty much count on" because it is possible that a group of people get together, in the aftermath of a crisis, and train themselves to be an effective fighting force. If that happens,

you'll have a pretty dangerous enemy to confront. But for the most part, you'll be facing a group of hungry people with a mob mentality.

The mob mentality is interesting. In a nutshell, when people gather as a mob, they pick up on the mob's attitude and their inhibitions are lowered. That causes them to do things that they otherwise wouldn't, especially illegal things. Mild, law abiding, non-violent citizens can become violent maniacs when they are part of a mob.

The basis for this change is anonymity. When one is part of a mob, they are not an individual. They don't expect others to recognize them. They feel hidden, able to commit atrocities without any fear of reprisal. That makes them dangerous, because they become unpredictable.

If you know anyone in the mob, you can break the mob mentality by picking them out by name. Once they are called out by name, they are no longer anonymous. The "protection" that the mob offered them is no longer there for them. They suddenly realize that they can be found guilty of a crime. That realization can be enough to cause them to back off in many cases.

Let me get back to the issue of not having military training for a moment. There are just a few basic principles that make the difference between a mob and a well-trained military unit; these are:

- Training
- Equipment
- Discipline
- Coordination

Of those four, the last one is the most dangerous. One of the things that make a military unit effective is coordinated action. They support and protect each other, so that each individual is made more effective. They will attack on multiple fronts at the same time, distracting the defender and making them unsure. Their movements will be coordinated as well, with one element firing at

you, while another moves. All of this makes a trained military unit much more effective than a mob of armed men who don't have that coordination.

You can use that lack of coordination to your advantage. There will always be some in the mob who are the hard chargers, being the first to attack. There will also be a few who hold back. Taking out the hard chargers is the fastest way to demoralize a mob, causing them to leave.

Those hard chargers may decide to do a Rambo and attack you alone, running from the group to attack your home. When that happens, the rest of the group will probably be watching to see what happens, not following them. They don't realize it, but what they've just done by doing that is to throw away their numerical advantage. No longer is it a mob attacking a home, it's a lone man attacking. That one man is much easier to deal with than 20. Taking him out may be enough to get the rest to turn around and run.

Let me say something more about this. The most important people to take out in any attack are the leaders. If you can take them out, you'll break the attack. So, while you are dealing with the mob, have someone who is just looking to identify the leaders. When push comes to shove, and you're down to one bullet, that's the guy you've got to kill.

I need to take a moment to clarify two confusing terms here; cover and concealment:

- **Cover** - Cover is anything that someone can hide behind, which is strong enough to stop a bullet. This would include trees, large rocks and the front end of cars. Attackers who take advantage of cover have the advantage of shooting at you, with little risk of being hurt.
- **Concealment** - Concealment is anything that an attacker can hide behind, to prevent you from seeing them. However, it doesn't provide any protection for them from bullets, other than making it hard to take accurate aim at them.

You will probably have both cover and concealment around your home. Given enough time, you can clear much of this away, denying your enemies the opportunity to use them against you. On the other hand, you may want to have cover and concealment that you can use, if you are attacked while working outside the home. We'll talk more about this later.

2.1 Deter and Delay

There's an old saying that locks only keep honest people honest. Basically, that's because criminals don't care that things are locked. While a locked door may stop the guy who's thinking about taking advantage of a situation to pick up something for free, it won't stop any truly committed criminal. However, if there are enough locks on that door, along with all the windows and everything else, the criminal may just decide that it's too much work.

Criminals are what they are because they are lazy. In their mind, it is easier to take what others have worked for, than to work for it themselves. If what they want to take is too much work, they'll go somewhere else to take it from someone else.

That works to your advantage as a prepper. You've put the work into preparing for a disaster; work that others are too lazy to do. Those who want to take what you have are criminals, although most of them probably weren't before the disaster. Nevertheless, post-disaster, they have developed a criminal mindset; take what other have, instead of work for it yourself.

Since these people are essentially lazy, the harder you can make it for them to take what you have, the better a chance there is that they'll go someplace else. They want food, water and other supplies; but they don't want to die in order to get it.

The harder you can make it for these people to get into your home, the better. At the same time, you really don't want to make your home look like an armed camp. The more it looks like a fortress that you are defending, the more it will convince them that you have something inside your home, which needs to be defended. That will motivate them to put you at the top of their attack list.

The idea here is to make it hard to get onto your property and into your home as possible, while not making it seem like you've done so. That might take a little bit of creativity and imagination. Your defenses need to be robust enough to make it hard for them to get in, while not being obvious enough to allow them to realize that you even have defenses.

You've got to realize that there's no such thing as a perfect defense. A determined attacker can always find a way to get through your defenses. So, the idea isn't to try and turn your home into Fort Knox, it's to try and make it difficult enough to get into that they decide it's not worth it and give up.

At the same time, the longer it takes for your assailants to get through your outer defenses, the more time you have to react. In many cases, a few seconds of time to prepare your reaction is the difference between life and death.

Armies, SWAT teams, and terrorists alike strive to create tactical surprise. Why? Because it takes time for people to react; even if it's only a few seconds. That time is their prime killing time. By having your outer defenses delay the enemy, you gain that few precious seconds you need, in order to be able to meet them on your terms.

As they are doing that, you want your defenses to shape the battle, by directing them in a way that you've already determined. In other words, you want to turn your defenses into a well-planned ambush. That way, if they aren't deterred, you've got the best chance of accomplishing the most damage in the least amount of time.

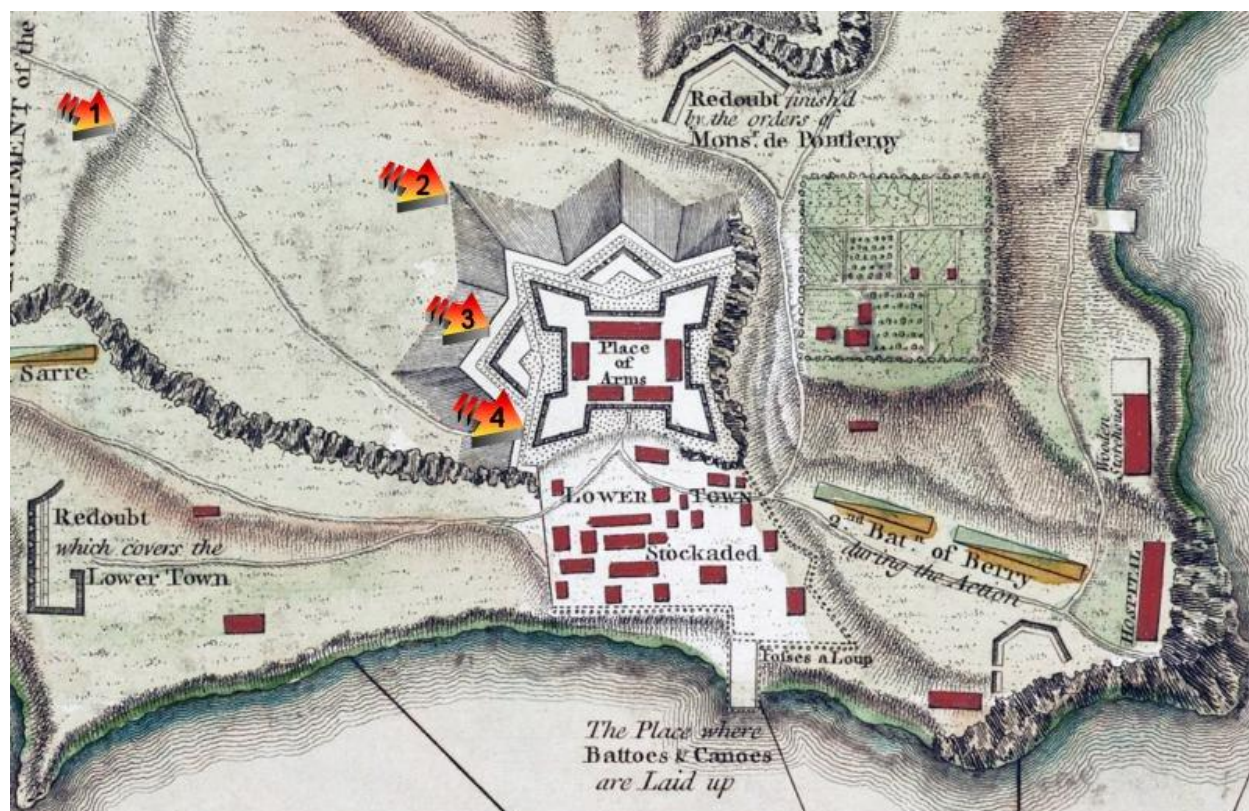
Deterrence can be anything from obstacles to traps; locks on doors to bars on windows; literally anything that will make them waste time trying to get into your home. Every extra second that your defenses gain for you is a second to your advantage.

2.2 Layering Defenses

One of the ways of getting your defenses to give you more time is by using the concept of layering defenses. This is an old concept, which we see used

throughout history. It is still used by military organizations, whenever they have to establish a static location. Attackers have to deal with each layer of the defense, taking time and resources to breach that layer, before they can go on to the next one.

This is much easier to understand by looking at it, rather than by talking about it. Take a look at this diagram of Fort Ticonderoga in upstate New York:



Fort Ticonderoga was built by the French in the 1700s. It protected a disputed trade route between the French Canadians and the British. Later, it had a part in the U.S. Revolutionary War. Even being so old, this detail from a 1758 map shows that the fort clearly utilized the concept of defense in depth. The four numbered arrows I've added to the map show the four layers, two of which are not part of the fort itself, but actually outside it.

The first two layers of defense are the perimeter. These are both earthworks where troops can have cover and concealment to engage attacking enemies. While they were fighting, the fort's cannons and sharpshooters would

be supporting them. In the case of overwhelming enemy odds, they could fall back from the first position to the second, then from the second to the fort itself. The two outer triangular sections of the fort could be abandoned if necessary, with the fort itself being the final level of defense.

Your home needs to have layered defenses as well. Ideally, you'll have a perimeter, some other layer of defense outside the home, and the outer wall of your home. In some cases, you may even be able to create another layer of defense within your home, slowing your attackers even further.

Each layer takes the enemy time to breach; that's the point. The more time that they have to battle to get in, whether battling against your defenses or against you personally, the more of a chance you have of turning any attack aside. We will go into detail on each of these layers, discussing various things which can be used to make each of them harder to penetrate, giving you more time to react and more possibility of turning aside any attackers.

2.3 Defense in Depth

The concept of defense in depth works hand-in-hand with a layered defense. In a way, a defense in depth and a layered defense are the same thing. The more ground that an attacker has to cover in order to get to your home, the more time you have to react to their attack.

Depending upon the location of your home, you may have excellent defense in depth or almost no defense in depth. For most people, their perimeter starts at their property line. That gives a distinct advantage to people who live in rural areas, as they usually have more land to work with. Establishing a perimeter on a 20 acre tract of land is much different than establishing one for a home in a sub-division of a city.

Of course, the assumption is usually that you are defending on your own. However, if you can co-opt your neighbors, making them part of your defensive plan, you can create a perimeter which is much larger than your property line. In essence, your whole block can be your perimeter, assuming everyone is working together to defend each other.

The idea here is to engage the enemy as far from your home as possible; assuring that your family stays safe. If you are out on a mountainside somewhere, you can start picking potential attackers off at long range with a scoped rifle. Just be sure that they are truly enemies who are intent on attacking you. In the city, everything compresses.

The end of the block, two houses away, may be as long-range as you can think about operating. Even so, that little bit of extra range is valuable and should be used if it can be.

Working together with neighbors, you can establish the houses towards the center of the block as the “safe houses” where women and children gather in the event of an attack. That’s also a good place to put the majority of your supplies, protecting them along with your families.

In this type of warfare, each home becomes another layer of defense for you and your team. The idea is to make the enemy fight to gain every foot of ground, while doing everything possible to protect your team from injury.

It is important to strike a balance between protecting property and protecting life. Having everyone in your party injured after an attack could be just as lethal in the long run as having them all killed by bullets in the first five seconds. If people are injured, they can’t do the work necessary to survive. Add to that the difficulty in finding adequate medical services, and those injuries can become fatal.

2.4 Rural Versus Urban Defense

As I already said, the major difference between urban defense and rural defense is one of distance. This is a two-edged sword, which cuts in both directions. If you have those 20 acres in the woods, you might have plenty of defensive depth; but not enough people to defend it. Building the necessary defenses would be much harder as well, as they have to cover a much larger area.

In an urban environment you end up battling your opponents at a much closer range. However, you have much less perimeter to defend. That means that

a smaller team of people, such as your family, can do a much better job of defending.

While your perimeter will be much smaller, it will also be much closer to your home. How close it is depends upon where you live and the type of homes there are in that area. In the suburbs, your perimeter is your property line, unless of course you are working together with your neighbors. In that case, you might be able to make your perimeter be the end of our block.

On the other hand, if you live in the center city, in an apartment building, your perimeter might be the door of your apartment. The best you might be able to do by working together with neighbors is to extend that perimeter to the front door of your building.

This means that any potential enemies can get much closer without being seen. They will have much better cover and concealment than they would have in the suburbs or in a rural area. One common tactic in such a situation would be to enter into an abandoned building and use it as a base to attack the neighboring buildings.

Snipers could shoot from building to building as well as attack teams leaving one building to attack the neighboring building. The close range gives very little time to respond, making the need of being prepared to repulse attacks and the vigilance to watch for them, a constant need.

If you find yourself in a situation where you have vacant buildings alongside your building, it can provide an opportunity to extend your perimeter. By occupying those building and using them for observation posts and sniper perches, you are able to keep any attackers farther from your home. As we were talking about earlier, when we were talking about a layered defense, that abandoned building becomes another obstacle they have to win their way through, before they can attack your home.

Whether you are dealing with a rural defense situation or an urban one depends a lot on your personal plans for dealing with a crisis. It also has a lot to do with your personality and where you are the most comfortable. People who create plans to bug-out to a remote location are generally more self-sufficient and are planning on their family or group living more or less isolated from the rest of society. Those who plan on bugging-in are probably planning on dealing with other people around them, working in cooperation with them to survive.

If you are planning on bugging-in in an urban environment, then you should plan on including others in your prepping. Whether those others are involved with you in prepping before the fact or not, they need to be part of your plans.

One way to do this is to make plans for a mutual defense agreement with your neighbors. Even if you don't do anything else, that can be highly valuable. In preparation for their help, you should plan on having enough weapons for them to use as well as those that you have for your family or team to use.

The easiest way to arm neighbors is to have .22 rifles for them to use. While the .22 is not a very effective weapon for fighting with, it is easy to use. You can give a scoped .22 rifle to a novice, along with minimal training, and have them shooting with some accuracy in a manner of minutes.

Since your goal is to stop any attack, rather than being focused on killing people, the more armed people you have, the better. A lot of ineffective fire can accomplish your goal, by scaring off your assailants. We'll talk more about this later.

3. The Right Defensive “Attitude”

Let’s talk about attitude for a moment. If you don’t have the right attitude, you’re not going to be able to protect yourself, let alone protect your family. Attitude can make a huge difference in your ability to act when the time comes. In fact, if you don’t have the right attitude, you probably won’t act; becoming a victim, rather than a victor.

Military organizations, especially elite units like Special Forces, have learned the value of attitude. In fact, often what makes the difference between elite units and regular units is to tell the soldiers that they are elite, then wait for them to live up to their expectations of themselves.

Having an arsenal in your home, but not being ready mentally and emotionally to kill is worthless. There’s an old saying about firearms safety, which says: “Never point a gun at someone unless you’re planning on using it.” We can add another important saying to it, which says: “Never shoot at someone, unless you’re planning on killing them.” While these sayings were written about using guns, they apply to all weapons, not just guns. So, by putting them together, we get: “Never grab any weapon to use, unless you are ready to kill someone with it.”

That’s an important attitude to have. Let me be clear here. Anyone who comes to attack your home isn’t coming to play patty cake with you. They are coming to do you harm. The best that you can expect from them is that they beat you to a pulp, throw you out in the street, and steal everything you have. On top of that, you can probably add that they’ll rape your wife and daughter, along with putting a couple of bullets into your brain.

You can’t talk to people like that; you can’t reason with them, and you can’t ask them to leave. Your only options are to give them everything you have, realizing that they won’t be satisfied with what you give them, but still want more, or you can fight. If you chose to fight, you have to fight to win.

What does win mean in this context? In reality there’s probably no such thing as a complete victory. Rather, what you’re looking for is for them to leave

and leave you alone. That doesn't mean that they'll leave forever, just that they leave for the moment. You can pretty much count on them coming back sometime; and when they do, they'll come back with more people and better weapons.

Of course, if you kill them, you don't have to worry about them coming back. One of the major reasons why they hung people in the Old West was that dead people can't commit any crimes. While society has supposedly gotten more "civilized" since then, criminals haven't. If anything, they've learned how to be more effective criminals.

Actually, you don't need to kill everyone who comes to attack you. In any mob there will be a couple of leaders, a bunch of people who are willing to follow them and a few that would rather not be there. If you can identify those leaders and deal with them, it will usually be enough. Once they are out of the picture, the rest of the group will leave you alone, at least until another leader comes along. Then you might see the same group back again.

Don't expect to be ready to deal with a violent situation if you've never thought through dealing with it. People can't jump from being peaceful to being violent in a moment, without the right mental preparation. When I joined the Army, I had to go through this process. In order to be mentally ready to go to war, I had to reprogram my mind. I had to convince myself that I was no longer a peace loving man, but I was a deadly killer.

When I got out of the Army, I had to reprogram my mind once again. This time, I had to remove the programming to be violent, so that I could deal with my family, my neighbors and my workmates. No longer was violence the answer to dealing with problems, I had to use words instead, and reasonable words at that.

Then came the night of my wakeup call; once again I found myself reprogramming my brain, putting back in the program of violence that I had made a point to remove. I had to think in terms of threats again, observing everything and evaluating whether or not it was a threat. I had to look at situations and

places from the viewpoint of how I would attack or defend them. In other words, I had to become a soldier in my thinking once again.

You have to do the same thing! This is essential to your survival! If you aren't thinking like this, you will die! I don't care how good a shot you are, if you aren't thinking about things as threats, pre-planning your actions and being constantly ready to react, you'll go down before you can put all your shooting practice to use.

I mentioned a moment ago that I had to be constantly evaluating the situation from a viewpoint of threats and dangers. This is critical; the way that we say it is that "you need to keep your head on a swivel." If you can't see what's going on behind you, it's because you're not looking. You should be aware of everything that happens in your presence. Who is carrying a shopping bag that could be hiding a bomb? Is there anyone who is dressed in a way that doesn't match the weather? Could someone be carrying a gun under their clothes?

The first few seconds in any violent incident are the most critical. It doesn't matter if it's a military ambush or a robber in a store. In both cases, they're depending upon surprise to allow them to get away with what they want to do. In that few seconds, the most people are killed, simply because they didn't have time to react.

After that first few seconds trained people begin to react. How they react depend upon how they are trained, the tactical situation they find themselves in and what weapons they have at their disposal. If the attackers don't complete their goal in that time, they can be assured that they will have mad defenders to deal with. The situation will instantly go from being a one-sided attack to being a two-sided battle.

That's why you need to keep your head on a swivel. If you are aware of your surroundings, and evaluating the potential threats around you, your reaction time can go from five seconds to about one second. That four second difference

makes a huge difference in any battle, and can convert a sure defeat to a stunning victory.

Once you recognize an attack is happening and deadly force needs to be used, the faster and more violently you can make that attack, the sooner you can end it. This is something that the Army learned long ago. The quicker and more violent that force could be applied the more American lives could be saved.

Get this straight in your thinking. This isn't the time to try and talk to people; this is the time for action. Those that want to talk are bullies. They want to make you afraid, so that you won't resist them. Once they have shown themselves to have violent intentions, they are no longer people to talk to; they are enemies to get rid of. Another way to look at them is as targets.

Don't get me wrong here; I'm not advocating murder. You shouldn't shoot until you are absolutely sure that they are a threat to you and your family. But when it's time for action, then do it with all the violence you can muster.

Warning shots are a waste of time; actually, in most places they are illegal. There's always the chance that a warning shot will hit an innocent bystander; a risk that you don't want to take. All a warning shot does is to take away the element of surprise when you have to start shooting for real. It will also tell them who is armed, so that they'll know who to shoot at first.

You have to settle this in your mind before the time comes. The time you spend deliberating over having to kill someone to protect your family could easily be enough time for your family to die. This is serious business. The only way you're going to be ready to do what is necessary when the time comes is to prepare yourself mentally for the idea of killing your enemies. Hesitation can and will get you killed.

Massed fire has long been a very effective military tactic. Back in the days of the Revolutionary War, armies marched out onto the battlefield in organized units, and fired together en masse. It was called massed fire and it was a

psychological weapon. The idea was to freak the enemy out with the massed fire and cause them to break and run. It's always easier to shoot down an enemy who is running in fear, rather than shoot at one that is shooting back at you.

This same strategy is still in use today. The artillery has a tactic called "time on target." The idea is to time the shooting of all the cannons and rockets that are trying to hit one place, so that they will all land at the same time. Since the flight time of different artillery rounds, mortar rounds and rockets is different, they would shoot at different times, carefully calculated to ensure everything arriving at the target at the same time.

There's another practical aspect to this as well, in addition to the psychological one. Massed fire increases the chance of hitting more targets in less time. This is especially important for that all-important first salvo. If you have five defenders, and twenty assailants, then you want to make sure that you take out five assailants with the first salvo and quickly shift to another five targets. That could theoretically cut their attacking force in half, in a matter of seconds. If they don't break and run after that, they're probably on drugs.

The faster and more violently you can meet any attack, the better your chances of survival. You don't want a prolonged engagement; you want it over in minutes, or even seconds. The longer your enemy has the more chance they have of getting you or one of your family members. That's a steep price to pay for hesitation.

3.1 Legal Risks in Defending Yourself

I need to clarify something here. While defending your family is your right as an American citizen and your responsibility as a person, you need to be careful of more than bullets. Just because society breaks down at some point in time, doesn't mean that it will stay broken down. At some time, things will return to some semblance of normal and then the hand wringers will get their panties in a wad. Once that happens, they'll be hunting for anyone who did what was necessary to protect their family. Count on it.

The law gives you the right to kill in self-defense, defense of your family, defense of others, or defense of your property. There's only one little problem with the law; that is, the court has to rule after the fact that you were justified in the use of deadly force.

With this in mind, you need to make sure that you are justified in the use of deadly force, before you use it. That means that there has to be an imminent threat to you, your family, or your property. The threat needs to be obvious enough that others will see it that way as well, because at some point in time others will be reviewing your actions to determine if you were justified.

You had better expect that you will go to court for your actions at some time. You will have to show why it was necessary to kill, in order to protect your home and family. So, you need to make sure that you have sufficient evidence to prove your case. While it may sound crazy right now, having a family member take pictures, or better yet video, of the event may just keep you out of jail.

This is one of those places where politics affects the court. If you live in a conservative state, you are much more likely to be able to walk away from that courtroom a free man. Actually, if you have enough evidence of the need to defend yourself; such as witnesses, photos and video, then you may not even have to go to court. The police or the District Attorney may decide to not prosecute the case, based upon the evidence that you have.

On the other hand, if you live in a liberal state, you may be in big trouble. Liberal politics protects the criminal much more than it does the victim. They are much more likely to come after you and much more likely to convict you. Depending upon the state, it may not matter to them that you had to protect your family. They'll say that you should have reasoned with your assailants, called the police, run away, or some other silly garbage.

Having said that let me ask you this question. Are you willing to go to jail to protect your family? If the choice is your daughter getting raped or you going to jail, will you kill someone and go to jail to protect her? You see, that may be the

price of protecting your family, so that's something else that you have to have settled in your mind before it happens.

Besides criminal liability, there's also civil liability for shooting or killing someone. In other words, after going to court to determine whether you were justified in killing some scumbag who wanted to attack your family, you may end up in court again, being sued by said scumbag or their family.

As crazy as that may seem, it happens fairly regularly. That's why some people say that it's better to kill a crook in your home than to wound them. If you wound them, they can try and sue you for their pain and inconvenience; claiming that they can't work because of the injuries that you inflicted upon them. They aren't the only ones that can do this though. If they die, their family can do the same thing.

There's not much you can do to protect yourself from such a civil suit, other than to make sure that you are justified in killing said scumbag. If you win the criminal case, there's a much better chance that you will win the civil one; especially if the assailant is dead.

4. Don't Become a Target

There's a military axiom which says, "The best defense is a good offense." I have my own, modified version of this. It goes, "The best defense is not becoming a target." What I mean by that is that if nobody has a reason for attacking you, you won't have to worry about being attacked.

You've got to realize that in the aftermath of any crisis, people are going to be on the prowl. You've seen it on the news reports; people looting, stealing, breaking into homes, even rooting around in garbage dumpsters for the things that they need to survive. You're going to see it again; only this time, you'll see it much more up close and personal.

While there are no accurate figures as to how many preppers there are in the United States, estimates put it at somewhere between two and three million people. With a population of over 300 million, that's still well less than one percent of the population. The rest of the people out there are expecting FEMA to come to the rescue, riding on a white horse and with federal government funds (otherwise known as your tax dollars) in their hands to solve all their problems.

When things fall apart and FEMA can't meet their needs, those same people will be looking for whatever they can get. Since most people only have less than three days worth of food in their homes, it won't take long for all those millions of people out there to get desperate. Then they'll start hunting. They're first stop will be the stores. Supermarkets, liquor stores, hardware stores, and sporting goods stores will be cleaned out of anything useful. Some will bypass the useful stuff, and go right on to grab the big-screen televisions and boom boxes. Then, they'll start preying on each other.

In that situation, there will only be two basic ways to prevent being attacked. The first is to look so strong to the attacker that they decide to leave you alone and find somebody else to pick on. Not only is that rather expensive to accomplish, it's just about like putting up a billboard on the roof of your home that says, "Preppers Live Here!"

The other way is to fool people into thinking that there's nothing to be gained by attacking you. Poor people generally don't think of stealing from other poor people, unless they see that the other poor person has something that they want. The general assumption is, "They're as poor as I am, it's not worth attacking them." Instead, they go looking for somebody who's going to have something worth stealing.

That somebody else is you, unless of course, they don't realize that you have anything worth grabbing. Therein lies the secret; making it look like you're not worth bothering with. You're home defense problems are going to be greatly lessened if they don't come to attack you. So, it's important to do everything you can to make sure that they don't know who you are, what you have, or that you are living any better than they are.

If you're living like everything is hunky-dory, that will be like putting up that billboard again. Many of the things that you are doing to prepare for a disaster can very easily make you and your home stand out, making you into the target that you don't want to be. Even while you're enjoying your stockpile of food and drinking from your well, using the light produced by your solar panels, you don't want others to know.

All this is called Operational Security, or OPSEC. In the military, it's the idea of denying the enemy information about who you are, what you're doing, what your capabilities are and what your plans are. That's really no different than what you need to do with your prepping. You need to deny the same information to all the people around you who might want what you have.

There are several aspects to OPSEC, I'll try to cover as many as I can.

Appearance of your home

If you are in an area that was hit by a hurricane, there will be a lot of damage to homes and other buildings. While there might be a few which avoid any major damage, they will be few and far between. If your home is the only one in the area which doesn't look like it sustained any damage, then it might look

suspicious to people passing by. Likewise, if you manage to get it repaired faster than anyone else.

An easy thing that you can do to make your home look more damaged and increase your physical security in other ways, at the same time, is to put plywood over your windows. Some people who live in hurricane prone areas have precut pieces which they can install whenever needed. If you have these, or can make some out of plywood, it will help make your home appear abandoned.

At the same time, those pieces of plywood will prevent anyone from seeing what's going on inside and help keep any light from your lamps indoors. Should anyone decide to attack your home, plywood is fairly hard to break, making it harder for them to come through your windows.

Any gardening for fresh vegetables or livestock you have needs to be hidden in the back yard, preferably behind a privacy fence. If people don't see it, hopefully they won't think it's there.

Light discipline

One of the easiest giveaways that you are in better shape than your neighbors is having lights shining out of your windows, when everyone else's power is out. Most preppers have generators, solar panels, or wind generators (or all three) to provide their home with power in the case of an emergency. Even so, if people see that light shining through the windows, they're going to be wondering where it is coming from, and why you are the only one who has electricity.

If you are going to be using electric lights in the midst of the crisis, then I recommend using low wattage electric lights, that won't be so obvious. If you have a battery backup system, you can run wires through your house to run 12 volt automotive lights. These may not be as bright as what you're used to, but they will provide enough light for most activities.

The best thing to do is to install blackout curtains. These are dark, heavy curtains, which are designed to prevent light from escaping through the windows.

To do this, they need to be made of heavy fabric and be larger than the window, so that they cover the window and can seal the space around it.



Don't forget about flashlights either. While there will be other people with flashlights, the longer the disaster lasts, the less batteries there will be available for them. If you have to use a flashlight, use it sparingly, and do whatever you can to hood the light and keep it from being obvious.

In the military, they use a red lens on flashlights, with a light blocker behind it. The light blocker is a solid plate, with just a pinhole in the middle. Between the two, very little light escapes, keeping it from being seen from far away.

Trash

Simple things can give everything away, especially to people who are looking for them. If you have a bunch of trash piling up at the curb, you can be sure that somebody is going to take a look to see if there is anything useful in it. If they find a bunch of empty food packages, they're instantly going to know that you have food, while everyone else is starving.

The easiest way to take care of this problem is to burn your trash. You've got to be careful about that, though, as burning trash could be a giveaway in and of itself. However, if you're cooking outside over a fire, there's nothing to say that you can't use your trash to start the fire and burn some more of it as fuel. That will serve two purposes for you; get rid of the trash, and save your stock of fuel.

The same can be done if you're using a fireplace to heat your home. Since you'll be burning wood in it anyway, throwing some packages in there as well

won't be a problem. Once again, this can serve to dispose of the trash, while helping provide heat to your home.

If there's no other possibility, then hide your trash in your basement or backyard, being sure to separate edible garbage from trash. The edible garbage can go into a compost heap, eliminating it, which will also help cut down on the stench from storing so much trash.

Cooking

Unless you're one of those fortunate people who has a propane stove or a cast-iron one, you're probably going to be doing your cooking outdoors. That means cooking on your grille or in a fire pit. There's nothing wrong with that, it's a good alternative for when your kitchen is out of order.

However, there is a very high risk that your neighbors are going to know exactly what you're cooking. If that's a pot of beans and rice, it probably won't be such a big deal, but if you're cooking steaks on the grille every night, you can be sure that your neighbors are going to know about it, along with anyone else who passes by on the street.

The longer you go without power, the greater a problem that's going to be. The first couple of days after the power goes out, you're probably going to smell a lot of steaks on the grille, as people try to use up what they've got in the freezer before it can go bad. But once that first few days is over, there won't be too many people with steaks to grille.

This is one of those cases that you can cover up with a bit of subterfuge. Hopefully, you've got a good enough relationship with your neighbors, that you'll be helping each other out in a crisis. So, if you go hunting and get a deer, it would seem normal that you would pass on some meat to your neighbors. Hopefully, the next week one of them will go hunting and share with you as well. If everyone in the neighborhood is grilling meat outdoors once a week, it won't seem all that strange. The rest of your meat can be turned into jerky, and used in soups and stew that way.

Spices are another thing that can give away your abundance of food. When people are eating the most basic of foods, their sense of smell for well-seasoned food can actually be increased. If they smell well-seasoned food coming from your back yard, that will serve as another indicator that you have food.

I firmly believe in stocking spices, and I like well-seasoned foods. However, if my spice rack is going to cause me trouble, I'll put a padlock on it and throw away the key. My family's survival is more important to me than having gourmet meals.

Noise discipline

Noise can be another dead giveaway. The average person doesn't realize how much noise they create, just doing everyday chores. That noise will show that your home is occupied. If you want to appear like an abandoned home, you've got to control the noise.

Even besides that, if you're not trying to present the image of being an abandoned home, you still want to watch your noise levels, especially any sounds made by electronic devices. If you have music playing in your home or your kids are watching a movie on the TV, it can probably be heard from outside your home. People hearing it will wonder how it is that you have electric power, when they don't. It's not too much of a leap of imagination from there to wondering what else you might have that they can use.

Kids can be a real problem when it comes to noise discipline. If you have children, especially small ones, you'll need to watch them constantly to keep them quiet. The best way to do this is to keep them busy with tasks that don't make a lot of noise. Get them to help you and your wife around the house as well, making them a part, rather than just leaving them to play.

Activity

You're going to be more physically active in the aftermath of a disaster, than you are today. Just trying to survive is going to keep you and your whole family busy. Pretty much everything you do will have to be done manually,

without the benefit of modern conveniences. That's going to be a lot of hard physical work.

Trying to hide all this activity will be virtually impossible. Even so, there are a few things that you can do to camouflage your actions. More than anything, you can try and make your actions look like those around you. They'll be busy trying to survive as well, so your actions to look like you are trying to survive shouldn't look all that different.

Many things, like going to collect water from a nearby stream or lake will be the same as your neighbors are doing. Here again, you have a great opportunity for cooperation. If you can work together to collect and haul water, then you'll just be part of the group. You'll also make the job easier for both of you, as you can help each other out. Of course, you'll be the one with the water filtration system, so maybe you can help them out with that, in exchange for them helping you out in other ways.

Keep as much of your survival activity in your house or backyard as you possibly can. That will limit the number of people who can see what you're doing to your immediate family and your immediate neighbors. Here again you can co-opt them in your plans, by helping them. If they see you working in the backyard, growing vegetables, offer to help them get their garden started too; possibly in exchange for some labor.

Personal Appearance

With food shortages all around you, there's a good chance that people are going to be losing weight. If you're not, this could be another sign that you're in much better shape, supply-wise than anyone else. In a town full of malnutrition, a chubby person is going to stand out like a sore thumb.

Of course, if you're already thin, you're not going to have a problem with this. It's only those who are currently a bit on the heavy side that are going to end up looking a bit strange to others. They might want to go on that diet that they were talking about for years, as part of their OPSEC routine.

In addition to weight, there are other considerations about your appearance that you should keep in mind. Clean clothing, shoes that are in good condition, shaving, haircuts, and nail polish are all things that will stand out like a sore thumb, if nobody else around you has them. Once again, this is one of those things that's going to get worse with time. At the beginning, everyone will look fairly normal. But as the lack of soap and water make an impact, people will wear their clothes longer, even though they're dirty, wash their hair less frequently, and let their beards grow.

To some extent, you can get away with not looking like everyone else in this case, as long as it is easily explainable to the people around you. If they see you hauling more water than anyone else, they won't have a problem with you wearing clean clothes. If they see your wife cut your hair, they won't think much of it. As long as there's an explanation, they won't worry about it.

4.1 Secrecy

As a general rule, preppers try and keep their identities secret. They don't want people to know that they are preppers, because they are expecting things to get bad some day and don't want to have their friends and neighbors coming around looking for a handout. Every prepper knows that their friends could quickly become their enemies, if things get bad.

Keeping your preps secret may be harder than you realize. Neighbors tend to notice what each other are doing. If you suddenly start getting lots of shipments coming in from UPS and you never have before, you're neighbors are going to be curious. Likewise, if they see your garage full of canned goods or you unloading a pickup truck full of them into your garage.

It's not all that easy to keep things like this secret. In order to do so, you have to come up with ways of hiding what you are doing. Unload the car in the garage, with the door closed, rather than in the driveway. Have a good story to cover up the deliveries. Tell people that your water tank is so that you can mix chemicals into the water you use for your garden. Talk about how bad GMOs are, and that's why you're putting in a vegetable garden. Everything you can do to

feed people disinformation will help to throw them off the scent about you being a prepper.

You need to extend this to your kids as well. That's going to be a challenge. Kids like to talk to their friends about what's going on at home. You'll have to teach them that some things can be talked about, while others can't, not even in vague ways.

Another thing that you can do to help your kids keep your secrets is to help them come up with cover stories for your activities. If you take them shooting over the weekend, and they get to shoot three different rifles, you can be assured that they're going to want to tell their friends on Monday. Okay, so don't tell them they can't, just help them with a different story about why they were able to do so. Anything will work, as long as it's plausible and they can remember it easily.

By keeping your plans a secret, you extend the amount of time it will take for people to find out what you are doing. Every day of secrecy that you gain, is one more day of peaceful living after the crisis hits. Letting people know early is a big deal, as it will drastically reduce your family's security.

4.2 Storing Your Stuff

The last thing you want to do is to have your stockpile of food and water found by a snoop neighbor or visiting friend. If your garage is half-full of canned food, somebody is bound to see it and take notice. I don't care if they're your best friend, when society collapses and they have to feed their kids, they're going to be knocking on your door. If you don't help them, that best friend may just become your worst enemy.

With that in mind, you need to have your stockpile well hidden, rather than sitting on shelves in what looks like a warehouse. This can be complicated to accomplish, but it's not really all that hard. It can be fun trying to find places in your home where you can hide things:

- Inside walls – The average home is made with 4-3/4 inch thick walls. Of that, one inch is drywall and the rest of the space is either 2"x 4" studs or air. By removing the drywall on one side of the wall, you can access this space, making a great place for canned goods and boxed food. If you do this behind bookcases and dressers, nobody will know it's there.
- Under staircases – Many homes have staircases that are totally enclosed. In some cases, there is a closet under the stairs, at the upper end of the staircase. However, there's a lot more space that isn't utilized. By making an access in the back of the closet, you can create space for storing additional items.
- Ductwork – Your home's heating and air conditioning needs the ductwork that's installed in the basement or attic. But there's no reason why you can't add some additional false ductwork for storage. Use the same type as the existing, and hang it the same way, attaching it to the real ductwork. Just don't cut a hole in the side of the existing to allow the air to blow into your fake ducts.
- Pipes – If you have a basement, you can do the same thing with plumbing pipes as you can with ductwork, creating some fake four inch drain lines that don't carry water.
- A hidden room – Depending upon the design of your house, it may be possible to create a hidden room. This would have to be at one end of the house, where it doesn't appear that it is taking any space from the overall floor plan. All that is required is to make a bookcase to replace the door, which can be opened with a secret latch.
- Under the eaves – If you have a two story home where the second story has dormers, you have a whole lot of space under the eaves, which isn't visible and isn't used for anything. By making a secret access way through a closet, you can get to this area for storage.
- Drop ceilings – Many basements use drop ceilings, so that they can leave access to pipes and ductwork. If you have a finished basement with a drop ceiling, you've got ready hidden storage. Remove some of the ceiling tiles

and attach shelves to the sides of the floor joists. When the tiles are reinstalled, you can't see the storage.

- Camouflage it in plain sight – Everyone has boxes of miscellaneous stuff in their basement or attic. Most people are going to think that the box labeled “Grandma’s childhood toys” or “Baby clothes” are just that, not boxes of food that you’re saving as part of your prepping.
- Above closet doors – People open closets and look inside them all the time, but rarely do they look above the door or at the wall to either side of the door. You can inset storage boxes into the walls and put a small shelf above the door with little chance of them being seen. This is my personal favorite place for storing firearms and ammunition.

Hiding a large quantity of water can be difficult, but that is one of your family’s most critical needs. Many people hide water in gallon containers under their beds. Another solution is to bury it in your back yard. You can buy 50 to 200 gallon water tanks and bury them just below the surface. While they can probably be walked on without breaking, you want to put them in a place where that’s not likely. Cover them with a few inches of dirt and make sure you record the location.

Make sure that you have some caches of food and other critical supplies stored offsite. You want several of them, located off of all your bug-out routes. This can easily be done in the plastic tubs that are available for purchase anywhere. Obviously, you want to bury these in places where others aren’t likely to find them; not your city park.

To help make sure that some treasure hunter doesn’t find your cache, bury some scrap metal or a few coins several inches above the top of your cache. That way, if anyone comes by with a metal detector, they’ll find those coins or scraps of metal, and think they’ve found everything, leaving your cache in place. You must make sure that you have extremely detailed directions to find your cache should you need it. Measure from more than one landmark, as sometimes landmarks change. Always remember that you might lose that cache, so don’t put anything in it that’s irreplaceable.

5. First Layer of Defense – Your Perimeter

If you have to wait until enemies enter your home to engage them, you've already lost the largest part of the battle. Ideally, you want to keep them as far away from your home as possible. If you have to fight, you want to be able to do it at a distance, where you have the advantage of time and marksmanship to help you.

The Navy has a concept called "the outer air battle." The idea is to engage any incoming enemy aircraft as far away from the ships as possible, usually 150 to 200 miles away. This keeps them outside missile range, where they can't do any harm to the fleet.

While there is no way that you can engage enemies anywhere near that far away, the concept still applies. Your weapons are much shorter range than anti-ship missiles, so your maximum engagement range is much shorter as well. Nevertheless, you want the maximum engagement range that you can get, so that you can have the best opportunity to repel the attack. Remember, distance equals time, so every foot farther you can start engaging your attackers is more time you have to defend your home.

Another advantage of range is that of marksmanship. You are probably, let me repeat that, probably, a better shot than they are. That is, assuming that you actually go to the range to practice and that the mob is made of the usual liberal bunch that think it's unfair that you have food and they don't. So, by engaging them at long range, you increase the chance that they probably, again I say probably, won't be able to shoot back effectively.

There's a flip side to this coin, which I need to talk about. The farther away they are from your home, the harder it will be to prove that you are acting in self-defense. Remember, there will be an "after" to the crisis; a time in which the hand-wringers will start going after honest citizens who had to defend themselves. So, if you are going to engage any enemies at long range, make absolutely sure that they are enemies, before shooting. As tempting as it may

seem, you really don't want to go to jail for killing some government puke who is out checking the condition of the community.

Ideally, you want to take advantage of a layered defense and defense in depth. If you are in an urban environment, working together with your neighbors, the outer perimeter for your neighborhood might be the end of your block. Your inner perimeter would be your property line. If you are in a rural environment and have several acres to work with, your outer perimeter might be your property line and your inner perimeter the fenced-in couple of acres right around your home.

Your outer perimeter serves several purposes:

- It serves as a “tripwire” warning you that someone is coming, possibly to attack you
- It provides you with a means of warning off any enemies, such as by posting signs
- It gives you time to prepare
- It gives you the opportunity to delay their advance, by use of obstacles and traps
- It provides a first point of contact for the battle, which is far away from your home

Remember the map of Fort Ticonderoga and the multiple layers of defenses they had? That outermost earthworks was their outer perimeter. The next earthworks was their inner perimeter. Most of the fighting happened out there, not at the fort itself. The fort was the place to retreat to, if they couldn't beat the enemy out at the perimeter.

The more time it takes for an enemy to make it from the outer perimeter to your home, the more chance they have to change their mind and go away. To give them that time, you want to make it as difficult as possible for them to approach, using a combination of alarms, obstacles, traps and direct action.

At the same time, you can use those obstacles and traps, along with any terrain features that you have available, to “shape the battle,” moving the enemy into the ideal position for your kill zone.

We can use a little psychology here to set up the obstacles and traps. When faced with two options, an easy one and a hard one, most people will select the easy one. These people who are attacking you are lazy. If they weren't they'd be growing their own food, instead of trying to steal yours. For that matter, they'd probably be preppers themselves. So, you can pretty much count on them taking the easier route, when there is an option.

The second point of human psychology that can help us is that when faced with two options that are equally difficult, most people will go to the right. That's basically because 90 percent of the population is right-handed, so they are more comfortable going to the right. They will do so, without thinking about it.

Now, if you were facing highly trained troops, such as Special Forces, these psychological tricks wouldn't work. Special Forces, Navy Seals, and other “snake eaters” know about these psychological tricks and that their enemies know them as well. So, they make a point in attacking the enemy through the most unlikely route, whenever possible, knowing that the enemy will have mentally discounted the idea of being attacked from that direction.

Getting back to your attackers, who probably aren't SF or Seals, you want to make sure that you give them an easy route to take, and that everything else is as hard as you can reasonably make it. They will follow the route that you've established, without even realizing it.

Another way that this works is with traps. People will naturally cringe from a trap and move towards the other direction. So, if you have a group of assailants coming at your home, and you set up a trap to the left side of your “attack lane” they will turn obliquely towards the right when it goes off, just as if you had put an obstacle there.

5.1 Lookouts and Snipers

An unwatched perimeter is almost like not having a perimeter at all. While you're not likely to have trained troops attacking you, that doesn't mean that they'll all be a bunch of dummies. There's a good chance that some will be smart enough and clever enough to see any traps and alarms that you have and avoid them.

A lookout's job is to be a human alarm system. They are to watch the perimeter and the land leading up to it and warn everyone else that a threat is approaching. Ideally, they are able to do this long before the threat reaches the perimeter, let alone crosses into your area.

To function well, a lookout needs a good vantage point from which they can see all approaches to your perimeter. This is usually impossible, so in most cases more than one lookout is used. If they don't have adequate concealment to keep people from seeing them, they need good cover to protect them. Enemies who spot lookouts tend to try and shoot them.

To help with their duties, lookouts need a good pair of binoculars and a means of communication. Communications can be sophisticated radio systems, or something as simple as a bell that they ring. What you use depends in part on what you have available. The main advantage a radio has over a bell is that the enemy can't hear it as easily; so they won't know that you are alerted to their approach.

Remember that inclement weather reduces any lookout's effectiveness. While that same weather will probably dampen the desire of any assailants to be out looking for you, it may not stop them. Special Forces love to attack at night or when it is raining, so that their targets have less chance of seeing them approach. Some attackers may just be clever enough to realize that this gives them an advantage, especially if they've already tried once, and are planning a second attack.

While lookouts are there to be an alarm system, snipers are there to be your first line of defense. A good shot with a sniper rifle or hunting rifle can

engage enemies at a greater range, thinning their ranks before they get close enough to fire effectively.

Every sniper school in the world teaches their snipers to pick out leaders and shoot them. That's because most attackers draw their strength and bravado from the leader. If the leader is taken out, they suddenly realize that they are at risk. In the right situation, you can break an attack with one shot, simply by taking out the leader.

This is an important point. You don't have an army to fight with, so you need to make your efforts as effective as possible. That means making every shot count. If you have family members down and are running low on ammo, you sure don't want to be wasting it. Having a sniper take out the leader is the best way of guaranteeing a quick victory, with minimal risk to your side.

Let me mention something here. In the Vietnam War, there were 300 shots fired for every casualty. That's because the vast majority of shooting that was done was suppressive fire. This is intended to get the enemy to keep their heads down and prevent them from doing what they want to do. There's only one problem, suppressive fire uses a lot of ammunition up. If you're like most preppers, storing 1,000 rounds of ammo for each caliber of firearm you have, you can't afford to be wasting bullets on suppressive fire. You need to make every shot count.

That's why I'm not in favor of fully-automatic weapons for home defense. Unless you really know what you're going and have a lot of ammo to work with, all fully automatic weapons are going to do is eat up the ammo you have, leaving your family unarmed. Think about it. Well aimed and placed shots are much more effective than drilling holes in the air.

5.2 Alarms

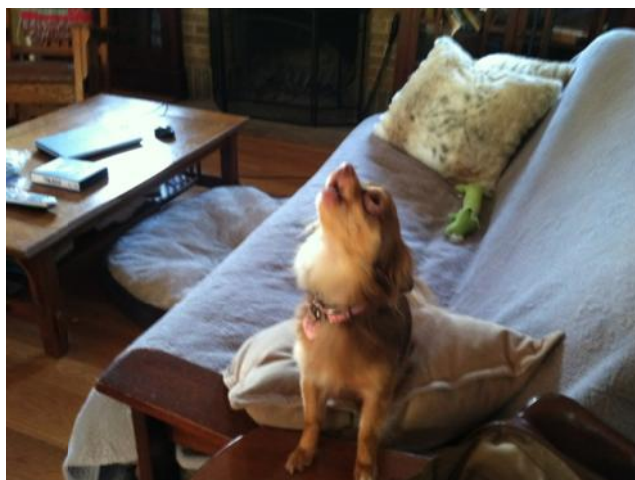
If you've got an alarm system installed in your home as part of your prepping, you're wasting money. That alarm will only work if you have electricity and phone service. In most disaster situations, you can't count on either of those. Besides, an alarm system is installed on the perimeter of your home, not your

tactical perimeter. If it goes off, that means that your enemies are already entering into your home. That's too late. If you haven't engaged them before they enter your home, you've greatly reduced your family's chances of survival.

That doesn't mean that you should ignore the idea of alarms altogether though, just that you need to rethink your alarms. Instead of having alarms on your home, you need alarms on your outer and inner perimeters. You need something that will help the lookout do their job, warning you of anyone approaching your home.

I'm not talking about installing an electronic alarm system around your perimeter. Unless you're wealthy, you probably can't afford that. Besides, you still have the problem of no electricity and no phone lines. For your alarms to be effective, they've got to be able to work without any infrastructure.

Mankind has used animals as alarms as long as man has had domestic animals. Many types of animals make excellent alarm systems; actually, it comes naturally to them. In the wild, these animals need to be alert in order to survive. They watch over their own community, in order to protect one another. A few of the best, which are easy for you to have, are:



- Dogs – Especially small dogs, as they tend to be more liable to bark, rather than try and fight

- Guinea hens – These birds are similar to partridges. They are excellent alarms, as they put up a racket any time someone comes near. They also are excellent for keeping your bug population down.
- Donkeys – Some types of donkeys, especially the smaller breeds, are excellent alarm systems, being very alert and always ready to raise the alarm.

If you live in a rural area, don't forget about the wild animals that are on your property. Wild animals have a pattern, which you will get used to hearing, if you pay attention. Any change to that pattern indicates that there is either a predator or a person disturbing them. Birds flying up suddenly is another indication of activity that could be an enemy.

In addition to animals, some sorts of mechanical alarms may be useful. The simplest and easiest way to create an alarm is with a tripwire. This is a thin wire or piece of fishing line, suspended at ankle height. The trip wire can be attached to any of a number of things which will raise an alarm. During the Vietnam War, Special Forces troops would take a C-ration can (same as your household canned goods) and put some pebbles in it, then hang it from the trip wire. Anyone who touched that wire would cause it to shake, making noise. While this doesn't work where it's noisy, you'd be surprised how far that sound can carry at night.

Speaking of night, another thing you can attach a trip wire to is a light stick. I've seen people do this, where the trip wire causes the stick to snap, mixing the chemicals and giving a silent, visual alarm. There is a spring-loaded device manufactured and sold for this, which makes it easy and effective to set up a light-stick trip wire. Other possibilities include the portable battery-operated alarms made to go on the doorknob of a hotel room and trip wire mines designed for paintball and airsoft players.

In the military, we had pyrotechnic trip wire alarms that we would use. Unfortunately, these aren't available for sale on the civilian market. However, with a little creativity and some fireworks, you could make your own.

The other thing that makes an excellent alarm is the intruder themselves. If you have traps which cause them to get hurt in some way, you can be sure that they will make their displeasure known, probably vocally and perhaps very loudly.

5.3 Barricades & Obstacles

Ideally, I'm sure you'd like to have a ten foot high reinforced concrete wall, topped with concertina wire, with guard towers in the corners. Unfortunately, that may not be all that practical. Not only will the neighbors complain about it, but people will surely know that you've got something hiding behind that wall which is worth stealing. Besides, have you seen how expensive concrete walls are?

Okay, so that's one extreme and having an open "border" on your property is the other extreme. Neither of those is very good, so what we need to figure out is a reasonable middle ground; something that is practical, but will help in offering your family some protection. At the same time, you want these passive defenses to help channel your attackers into your kill zone, so that you can fight them on your terms.

Let's talk about the kill zone for a moment. I've used that term several times, without really explaining it. On the surface, the name seems fairly obvious, someplace to have your assailants, where it is easy to kill them. That's basically what a kill zone is; but there's more to it than that. What makes a kill zone effective is how easy it is for you to kill your assailants, once they are in the kill zone.

The term "kill zone" actually comes from the tactics of forming an ambush; it's also referred to as a "kill box" and the Army of the old Soviet Union referred to it as the "fire sack." If you can, imagine a military ambush by a squad of soldiers alongside a road. They pick a likely spot to ambush a convoy and set up there. The squad is split into three groups.

One two man team is set at the spot where they want to hit the head of the convoy to stop it. Their job is to take out the lead vehicle and block the road. The second team is located at the point where they expect the last vehicle in the

convoy to be. Their job is to shoot the last vehicle in the convoy, blocking the road so that nobody can retreat. The rest of the squad is spread out between these two teams, in order to attack the rest of the vehicles.

Everything in that stretch of road, from the point where the first vehicle will be attacked to the point where the last one will be is part of the kill zone. Each soldier in the squad is placed in a spot along that stretch of road where they can fire into the kill zone, preferably with some cover and concealment.

Your kill zone will be someplace between your perimeter and your house, where everyone in your family or team will be able to bring fire to bear on your attackers. It needs to be visible from all your team members' firing positions, and be someplace where the attackers can't retreat from easily.

Since we've already decided that you aren't going to put up a ten foot reinforced concrete wall, you have to assume that any attackers will get through any obstacles and barriers that you erect. The only question is how long it will take them to do that. Remember, all the defenses on your perimeter exist for one reason only, to give you time to react; the more time, the better.

You want to plan your obstacles and barriers in such a way that any attackers will naturally end up going into your kill zone, hopefully without making it obvious that that's what you're doing. You do this by making an easy way to get around the obstacle, one that leads in the direction you want. To help encourage them to take that route, you make the other possible routes harder.

So, how can you make a barrier, if you're not going to build a cement wall? Actually there are a lot of things you can do, some of which could be considered "landscaping."

Fences

Many people put some sort of fence around their property. While a typical fence won't stop an assailant for long, it can slow them down. The worst fences for slowing assailants are short picket fences, chain-link fences (also called

hurricane fences) and wood privacy fences. Any of these can be scaled or cut through very quickly and easily. The best are wrought-iron fences, especially if you make them with spiked tops.

Of course, the higher the fence is, the more protection it offers. However, you have to balance this with your neighbors and the area where you live. In the southwest, wrought-iron fences are fairly common, but in the north they aren't. Putting up a six foot tall wrought-iron fence around your property in New Hampshire might look just a bit suspicious, but not in New Mexico.



If you put up a cement and cinder block wall, you can top it with broken glass. This has been done in Mexico for years. Collect a bunch of old glass bottles and jars and break them into large pieces. When the wall is just about done, spread a final layer of mortar on top and set the broken pieces of glass in it, pointy side up. While it won't stop a determined attacker, it will slow them down a bit, especially if they don't see it beforehand.

Hedges

An alternative to a fence is a hedge. These can be cheaper than a fence, especially a wrought iron one. For maximum protection, make sure that it's a hedge made bushes that have big thorns. Once again, it won't totally stop them, but it will slow them down, and make them look for an alternate route.

For any fence or hedge to work, it has to go full-circuit, without a break. Of course, you want something that forms a break in the path to your kill zone, but no other break. A gate could be a perfect way to do this. Anyone would try it to see if it was unlocked. Finding it so, they would go through that gate, rather than going over the hedge or fence.



The nice thing about hedges is that you can put them in long before you need them, allowing them to grow and flourish. The longer they are in place, the better a barrier they can make. They can also serve to keep your dog inside, so that he can patrol your yard, learning what is his territory.

Old cars and other junk

You probably don't want a bunch of old cars cluttering up your front yard right now, but in the event of a crisis, they might come in handy. Pulling a bunch of old, broken-down or burned out cars to your home and lining them around your yard could make an effective barrier in the event of a crisis. To make the barrier more effective, fill the spaces in between with other junk.

Literally anything from your garbage to cut off tree branches to chunks of a fallen-down house can be used to make a temporary barrier. The less neatly it is piled, the more effective it is as a barrier. In effect, you don't want it neat, as a

neat barrier might be fairly easy to climb over. The idea is to make it difficult enough to climb over that they'll choose to go around.

Natural barriers

Don't forget any natural barriers that you have on your property when you are planning your perimeter defenses. If you have a thick tangle of bushes on one side of your property, that makes a pretty effective barrier. Likewise for a canal, cliff, thick stand of trees, lake or many other natural barriers that exist.

At the same time, make sure that these natural barriers don't offer your adversaries a way to close in on your house without you knowing it. Many times, obstacles are a two sided sword, hurting you as much as they hurt any enemy. Even if they are impenetrable barriers, they may offer a sniper perch to your enemy. If that's a possibility, you want to know about it before they do.

5.4 Denial of Access

Natural barriers and some of the ones that you create can cause what is known as denial of access. In other words, they eliminate the possibility of someone approaching from that direction. Of course, you have to take into consideration how they are coming and what tools or weapons they have to use against you. A junk car in front of your house provides limited denial of access, but a pickup truck with a chain can remove it quickly. Likewise, a pile of tree branches can provide denial of access to people on foot, but can be eliminated with fire.

Once again, the areas you are denying access to are so that you can get your attackers to come at your home the way that you want to, so that they enter into your kill zone. Trying to totally deny access might just cause them to use more dramatic means of attacking. Think your plan through as if you were attacking your home and figure out what you would do. Then create obstacles and barriers to make it harder for them, while funneling them into your kill zone.

Don't forget about the back of your home either. It's easy to get tunnel vision and think that any attackers will come down your street. While that's the

most likely avenue of attack, you've got three other directions that they can come from. Make sure that the preparations you are doing for the main attack route are mirrored for those other routes as well.

The same group that comes at the front of your house unsuccessfully may come back again. If they do, you can be sure that they will have learned from their earlier experience, and not try to do the same thing again. Instead of a frontal assault, they may try and come over your back fence or through a neighbor's yard. Or, they may send a group to confront you at the front of your house, while attacking from the rear while you are dealing with that diversion.

5.5 Traps

Obstacles and barriers are one way of making it hard for attackers to get to your home, traps are another. Quite literally, a trap is anything that will cause your adversaries harm, while they approach your house. The possibilities for traps are so broad, that there is no way that we can cover them here.

If you ever saw the movie *Home Alone*, you saw an excellent example of creating improvised traps. Kevin used everything from paint cans to marbles to create traps for the two crooks that were trying to get into his home. While none of his traps were lethal, each of them inflicted pain on the crooks, slowing them down and discouraging them. In a real-life situation, it probably would have caused them to give up and go find another house to burglarize.

Some of the most effective military traps have been land mines, including the infamous Claymore mine. These are intended to disable or kill any attackers who get into their fire range. Antipersonnel mines are triggered by someone stepping on them or by a trip wire. Claymores can be set up with a trip wire as well, or they can be remotely triggered by the defenders.

There's a legal problem with making any sort of land mines. That is that they are considered bombs, and the manufacture of bombs is considered a terrorist act. While I'm sure that they would be effective in helping defend your home, I'm not so sure how the hand wringers would treat you in court. A lot

would depend upon the attitude of the judge and how conservative or liberal the state you lived in is.

However, there are things that you can do, besides explosives, to create traps. Forget the idea of creating a pit for them to fall into. Not only is that a lot of work to create, but it's also really hard to hide. If you have a home in the woods, you might be able to create a small pit for someone to step into, covering it with debris from the floor of the woods. The Viet Cong did this quite effectively during the Vietnam War, hurting and disabling many soldiers in the field.

Actually, the Viet Cong were masters at creating traps. One of their favorite tools was the punji stake. This was a sharpened bamboo stake, which was placed in such a way that the American soldiers would impale themselves on it. It was common to put these in holes in the ground, so that when a soldier stepped through the covering on the hole, they would not only step into the pit, but their foot or leg would be impaled by the stake.



If you have a gulley or hedge, you could use punji stakes as well, setting them in the gully or behind the hedge in such a way as to ensure that anyone trying to jump would land on them. That's the trick to making any sort of trap, anticipating the enemy's actions, and making the trap fit what you expect them to do.

Another great little trap is the caltrop. This defensive weapon has existed since the Middle Ages. It consists of four spikes, connected together in such a way that no matter how it lands; one of the spikes is sticking straight up. Originally this was used to break up cavalry charges, but it can be just as effective against people as it is against horses.



The caltrop in the picture is one that I made from a couple of 16d framing nails. I cut the heads off the nails and ground a point at that end. Then I bent them to a 105 degree angle. The final step was to weld the two nails together, to form the final caltrop.

Spreading caltrops inside of fences, ditches and behind obstacles that attackers might jump over is a great way to slow them down. While it won't hurt them enough to stop them, it will probably make them stop for a moment to nurse their wound. Should someone step on one, without adequately strong shoes, they might put it through the bottom of their foot, causing them to limp and slow down.

I mentioned earlier putting glass on the tops of cinder block walls. In a sense, that's a trap as well. The same broken glass can be used in other places, if you don't have any caltrops or happen to have an abundance of glass to break.

Don't forget that while you want your traps to hurt any aggressors, you also want it to funnel them towards your kill zone. The natural reaction to a trap is to shy away from it. So, if they see that an area is booby-trapped, they'll choose another route, whether if it means taking a longer way or just veering in the other direction.

While traps can be fun to create and helpful in your overall defense, don't count on them too much. Many assailants seem to have an almost supernatural way of avoiding traps, whether by walking around them, or just walking through them. If they help, that's great; but realize that only a small percentage of them will actually do any good.

6. Second Layer of Defense – Hardening Your Home

No matter how good a job you do on your outer defenses, you have to realize that a determined attack will get through. That's okay. Remember, the purpose of your perimeter defenses is to delay the attacker, so that you'll have time to react. If it does that, then it's been successful.

The next layer of your defenses, the outer wall of your home, is another thing. While your perimeter will eventually get penetrated, you don't want your home to get penetrated. You actually want to stop them before they get to the wall, ending the conflict in your kill zone. Even so, some might make it past that point, directly assaulting your home. For those, you want to stop them at the exterior wall.

Homes are not really designed to keep out a determined assault. They are designed under the premise of a lock keeping an honest person honest. The assumption is that most people won't break into a home, because they have to make it obvious by breaking a window or kicking in a door.

In a post-disaster situation, you can't count on honest people staying honest; in fact, you can't count on anyone staying honest. When people's children are hungry, they are likely to lose all reason and do just about anything. So, normal home defenses are basically worthless.

If you remember from the introduction, I talked about this and how useless I found all the normal security measure to be in my own case; and that was just against a normal criminal, not someone who was desperate to find food for their wife and children.

You also can't count on the police being there to help you. Whatever is going to happen to defend your home is going to be something that you do yourself. If the police are even still on duty, they'll be overwhelmed with problems. That means that they won't be available to take your call, saying that someone is trying to break into your home, assuming there's any phone service.

There are three basic ways that an assailant can get into your home:

- Through the door
- Through a window
- Through a wall

We're going to deal with all three of these areas, as separate areas, considering that the security measures which you use for each is considerably different.

6.1 Doors

The most common access point for a criminal entering a home is through the door. We are all used to going through doors, and so they try the door first. In most homes, they can get through the door and don't need to go on to other access points.

The average home door is a rather flimsy affair. While they are stronger than an interior door, they really aren't all that strong. It doesn't take all that much force to break through the front door of a home. If the door has a window in it, all they have to do is to bust through the window with a rock or hammer, and they can stick their hand through to open the door.



Doorways can be made much more robust, making it harder for an assailant to gain entrance. Typically, when talking about a door from a technical, security point of view, professionals will talk about points of attachment. Those are anywhere that the door is attached to the frame. Assuming that everything is locked as it should be, the more of these that the door has, the harder it is to break through the door.

A typical door has four to five attachment points. These are the three hinges, the door lock and a deadbolt. Adding additional deadbolts can greatly enhance the strength of the door, making it harder for someone to break through it.

If an entry door has three deadbolts, they should be spaced apart. While the deadbolts themselves would be stronger together, having them all together puts all the strain on the same part of the door frame, increasing the chance of breaking it. Since the deadbolts are stronger than the door frame, spreading them out makes the whole door stronger.

The next step is to strengthen the hinge side of the door. Hinges, in and of themselves aren't really all that strong, at least not compared to a deadbolt. You can make the hinges considerably stronger by adding a deadbolt element to them.

To do this, you'll need some 1/4" steel rod and a long drill bit that's just over 1/4" diameter, such as one that's 5/16". The drill bit should be at least six inches long. Remove one of the center screws holding the hinges to the door and drill the hole to at least five inches deep. Then, drill a half inch diameter hole in the corresponding hole on the door frame part of the hinge. Cut a piece of the steel rod that's 1/2" to 3/4" longer than the hole you drilled in the door, and glue it into the door. When the door is closed, the pin will go into the hole in the door frame side of the hinge. Do this for all three hinges.

While you have your drill and metal rod, don't stop there. One of the ways that criminals can gain access through a door that's locked is to cut around the door lock and deadbolt. You can make this much harder for them to do by adding some steel pins to that side of the door as well. The only difference is that this time you want to have the pins flush with the edge of the door, not sticking out into the frame.

An entry door that has been reinforced like this is considerably stronger than a standard entryway door. While it can't stop everything that can be done to break it open, it can stop a whole lot more.

The next thing that can be done to make it harder to gain access through the door is to bar the door. I'm sure you've seen some movie sometime where a castle is about to be stormed by the enemy. Before the attack, huge timbers are put into brackets, across the main door or drawbridge to the castle. This

strengthens the door considerably, but they don't stop there. The next thing they do is to put timbers from the door down to the ground, adding even more strength.

You can do the same thing with your home, adding metal brackets to bar the door with a 4"x 4" beam. You can make the brackets out of 1/8" thick steel strapping that is available at any building materials center. To be effective, the brackets must be firmly mounted into the studs that frame the door. 5/16" lag screws that are 3" long or larger should be used. To add the bracing, you'll need to cut 2"x 4" studs so that they go from the door to the base of an opposite wall or to sections of studs that you nail to the floor joists. You will also need sections of studs attached to the door for these to butt up under.

A door which has been reinforced in this way can probably withstand a car being driven into it. Of course, the walls around the door might break, giving the assailants access, but the door itself won't break easily.

Many homes today have sliding glass doors for the rear door. These are totally worthless from a home defense point of view. Even if you use all the tricks they tell you about, to make sure that they can't take the door off its tracks, all they have to do is take a sizeable stone and throw it through the glass. Once the glass shatters, they have clear access to your home.

If you are serious about protecting your family, change the sliding glass door on the back of your home for a standard steel entry door. Do all the same things that I've already talked about for the front door, so that they have the same problem at the back door as they do at the front door. Remember though, this may have to serve as your escape hatch. You don't want to make it impossible for your family to get out of this door; so, make sure that your bars and supports are easily removable from the inside.

6.2 Windows

Windows are the easiest way to gain access to most homes. Even double-paned windows are no match for a rock, hammer or axe. The only thing that

might keep most people from passing through the average window in the average home would be if the window is too small for them to get through.



There are a number of things which can be done to a window, in order to make it stronger and better to withstand attacks. The first of these is to replace all the window glass with the wire glass that is used in industrial facilities. While this isn't a perfect solution, it is much stronger than normal glass.

The second possibility is something that I referred to earlier, that is boarding up the home with plywood over all the windows. Once again, this isn't a perfect solution, but it is one that can provide an element of security. If the assailants have a chain saw, the plywood won't do much good, but plywood is fairly good protection against rocks, sledge hammers and axes.

The most important thing to do if you are covering the windows with plywood is to make sure that it can't be easily removed. If all you do is screw it to the side of the house or the window frame, than anyone with a screwdriver can get the plywood off. To make it more secure, drill holes through the plywood and put 8" long carriage bolts through it, from the outside in. On the inside of the window, make 2"x 4" bars to go across the window opening. The carriage bolts will need to pass through these, and be attached with a washer and nut on the inside. Tighten it down as good as you can. Be sure to do this in several places, so that they can't just pry the plywood off.

The best option is to put burglar bars on all the windows. This is common in Mexico and other countries. In the United States it isn't as common, although you see a fair amount of it in the states that border on Mexico.



Burglar bars are wrought iron bars which form a grating over the window. They are anchored into the brick or studs on the outside of the home. Once anchored, it is typical to grind the bolt heads, so that they cannot be removed.

Once again, this isn't a perfect solution, as all they would have to do is attach a chain to the burglar bars and pull them off with a truck. However, it is the most secure that you can make a window, while still leaving the window in place. In most cases, the burglar bars would be enough of a deterrent to convince the attackers to try something else.

6.3 Walls

Typically, walls are much harder to get through than either doors or windows. But, that doesn't mean that nobody's going to try and to it. If they're desperate enough, and find that they can't get through your doors and windows, they just might try and come through your walls.



If you have brick walls, you're fortunate, as you can't cut through them very easily. You can get through them with a sledge hammer, but only if you're willing to spend some time doing so. You can also bust a hole through a brick wall by crashing into it with a car or pickup truck, if you're willing to destroy the vehicle. But you

can't just cut a hole through brick and waltz on in.

Wood siding of any sort is much easier to get through. A few minutes with a chainsaw or circular saw will get you through pretty much any normal home wall that isn't covered in brick or stone. So, if you can afford to, adding brick or stone to your home is a great way to increase the safety factor of it.

Another advantage of brick is that it's much more bullet resistant than wood is. Pretty much any hunting rifle and the more powerful handguns will shoot through a wood wall. But handguns won't shoot through a brick one. Even smaller rifles have trouble going through brick walls, although more powerful hunting rifles and true military assault rifles can punch through brick without a problem.

That still leaves the problem of people crashing a vehicle into a brick wall, busting through it. This can be solved, at least to some extent, by making it impossible to get the vehicle to the wall. Placing obstacles in the way makes it virtually impossible to crash a vehicle into a wall.

This is what is done in our government's embassies around the world. The big concrete "flower pots" that are around the building aren't for decoration, they're there to keep explosive-filled vehicles from crashing into the building and going off. Vehicles can't make it through the flower pots, and can't move them either.



You can do somewhat of the same thing at home by building a planter all the way around your home. Make it at least a foot high and two feet deep. Be sure to put the brick or stone together with mortar, instead of just stacking them, and pound some pieces of rebar down into the ground to keep it in place. If anyone tries to run a vehicle into your home, they will

hit the planter first, losing most of their momentum. The bumper won't hit the wall, hopefully preventing the wall from getting damaged.

6.5 Fortified Positions



Every shooting position that you create needs to be fortified against incoming fire. As I already said, the incoming gunfire can go right through a wall, even a brick wall if they are shooting at you with hunting rifles. Since you can't rely on your home to offer you adequate cover, you need to add it yourself.

Basically, your windows are going to be your firing positions, especially your upstairs windows. So, that's where you need to add the extra protection from incoming fire. There are several ways of doing this, such as by adding armor plating in the wall. This can either be made of 1/4" or thicker steel plates or the fiberglass

armor that they sell for building safe rooms. While either of these options are expensive, they're cheaper than losing a life.

There is a cheaper way to build a fortified position, one which has stood the test of time and has proven very effective... sandbags. You can buy empty sandbags in your local building supply store, along with the sand to fill them. You'll need about 40 to 50 pounds of sand per sandbag, so plan on buying a lot. Don't totally fill the bags as they will be too heavy. You also want some slack in the fabric, so that the bag can conform to other things around it, closing up any gaps.

I'm sure you don't want to live with sandbagged shooting positions in your home year round, but that doesn't mean that you won't see the benefit in having them, when things fall apart and you need to be concerned about protecting your family. So, just put in a stock of the necessary supplies, and be ready to make them if you need them.

Sand weighs about one ton per cubic yard. Per building code, home floors are designed for a live load of 40 psf (pounds per square foot). A three foot high sandbag wall, one foot thick weighs 37 pounds per square foot. Therefore, your house floors should be able to support that weight, without problem.

You can easily keep a ready supply of sand on-hand, without raising the neighbor's curiosity, by building a sandbox for your kids. Make sure it's a big one, because you want to store up a couple of cubic yards of sand. A sandbox that is six feet by nine feet by one foot high will store exactly two cubic yards of sand. That's enough to build about six descent firing positions.

In a pinch, you can make sandbags out of almost anything. I collect legs off of worn-out pants for making sandbags out of. Cut off the legs, sew the cut ends together to close it, and you have a descent sandbag.

Don't just think of building fortified positions inside your home either, although that's the most important place to have them. Putting one just outside each doorway provides a place to fight a delaying action. If you do that, make sure that there's someone stationed at that door to open it and then bar it quickly.

The other advantage of putting a sandbag firing position just outside your doorways is that it makes it extremely hard for any attackers to use any sort of a battering ram. They are limited in the space they have available to work with, unless they want to take the time to move your sandbags.

7. Third Layer of Defense – Inside Your Home

Hopefully, the combination of your perimeter defenses, the hardening of your home and your withering fire will be enough to deter any would-be attackers and send them running with their tails between their legs. However, we can't count on hope; if we did, we wouldn't be preppers. So, we have to consider the possibility that your assailants will find a way to break through your defenses and enter your home.

If that should happen, there's a good chance that you're going to have to abandon your home. Regardless of how you feel about it, being alive and homeless is better than being dead in your home. If you're dead, you can't protect your family; nor can you plan a counterattack. So it's important to know when to cut your losses and run, before it's too late.

Whether you stay and fight or run as soon as they gain entrance depends on many variables. As we can't see exactly how things will happen, we can't begin to make a determination now as to what you should do then. Even if we did, there would always be extenuating circumstances which would prevent that decision from being valid; you might even find yourself in a situation where you couldn't leave flee your home for a safer place.

Even if you were to flee your home, you'd probably have to make one last stand inside your home, just to get a moment's breathing room in which to run. Never believe that the battle is over; as long as you are capable of fighting; your family is depending on you.

Many of the same principles that we used outside can be put to use inside as well. Barriers, obstacles and traps are all useful ways of delaying your adversaries and giving you a chance to shoot at them while they try and get through them. Besides, it's always easier to hit a moving target.

Once again, you want to think about how you want to make the enemy move. You don't want them running around your house in any way that they want to, you want them running into your kill zone. Yes, you should have kill zones

within the house as well. Plan your in-home defenses in such a way as to allow you to control the battle, by denying them the ability to move as they want to and corner you.

Your home is already filled with things that can be used as barriers and obstacles. Moving furniture around and tipping tables over only takes moments, but it slows them down, providing you an opportunity to attack them. That's the key, just like outside, you need time in which to act; so do things in such a way as to create time.

7.1 What About a Safe Room?

Let's talk safe rooms a minute. The traditional safe room is a hardened room within the house, where you and your family can run to and take refuge. Everything about it is designed to protect you from the attackers, so that you can survive an attack. Safe rooms have existed for centuries. Olden castles had a safe room in them, where the royal family would retreat to, while their personal guards would stage a holding action to protect them. While I'm sure that these have saved a few lives through the years, I'm also sure that they won't work for you.

Don't get me wrong here, safe rooms are great for what they are. It's just that what they are and what you need aren't the same thing. The idea behind a safe room is that it will protect you long enough for the cavalry to arrive in their squad cars. So, if you're a rich man, trying to protect your family from robbers, a safe room might be just what you need. But, if you're a prepper, trying to protect your family when society breaks down, there won't be any cavalry to come rescue you. If there are any police who are still on duty, they're going to be so overwhelmed, that they won't have time to come help every family that's under attack.

Besides that, what makes you think that there will be any phone service for you to use to call the police? There's a good chance that it will be out, making it impossible for you to call for any help. Without anyone to come rescue you, that safe room isn't safe at all; it's a trap.

Anyone who knows anything about defensive strategies knows that you never put yourself in a place where you don't have at least one avenue of escape. Even better than having one escape route is to have two, if there's any way that you can. Safe rooms, by definition, don't have an avenue of escape, they are supposedly the escape. That is, if you can call being in a box surrounded by enemies an escape. Personally, I call it a coffin.

Throughout much of history, attackers put cities and castles under siege. That means that their army would just camp outside of the city, waiting to starve the people who were inside. No matter how well prepared they were, the people inside would eventually run out of food and water. At that point, they'd give up, die, or die fighting.

There's not much difference between one of those safe rooms and the old castle. People who design and install them tell you to stock them with food and water, but eventually those supplies are going to run out. When they do, you're toast.

Besides the risk of starving to death, safe rooms really aren't that safe. Oh, they make special materials to construct them out of, which look pretty impressive in the sales videos. They will withstand some attacks; but it's the old story between arms and armament; armament always wins. If the people attacking your home can't shoot through your walls with one type of gun, they'll just go looking for a more powerful one. Failing in that, they'll make a bomb and blow you out.

Having said all that, you need a safe room. But what I'm calling a safe room and what they're calling a safe room aren't the same thing. You see, I'm not talking about a place to go hide in, waiting for someone to rescue you or for machine gun fire to rip through the walls. What I'm talking about is the room which your family will gather in, when it's time to make your last stand and get out of the house.

This concept goes back to ancient castles as well. Those ancient safe rooms weren't just a place to hide; they also contained a secret passageway. This was the place that the royal family would retreat to, so that they could escape, not so that they could await rescue. The idea was never to wait out an attack or wait for rescue. The idea was to have a layered defense, such as we've been talking about all along, with a final way of escape if all else failed.

That's the type of strong room you need in your house; one that you can make a final stand in, before putting your escape plan into effect. To function in this way, there are several things that your safe room will need:

- Central location that everyone can get to
- An escape route, or better yet, two
- Good lanes of fire to the directions the attackers can be coming from (remember, they may come from more than one direction)
- Descent cover and concealment for you to shoot from

This may require making some changes to your home, in order to make a workable safe room. You may need to add some of the armor plating that they sell for typical safe rooms and install a steel door. Remember, you're not doing this so that you can stay in that room, you're just doing it to provide some protection while you preparing to escape.

Let me stop a moment here to tell you something important about armor plating. All armor, whether it's on a main battle tank or a bullet resistant vest is rated based upon what is known as a full frontal shot. That means that the shot is being made at an angle exactly perpendicular to the surface of the armor.

Full-frontal is the point at which armor plating is the weakest. It has to absorb the full impact of the shots, without allowing them to penetrate. If the shot is coming at an angle, the armor has the possibility of deflecting it, rather than having to stop it directly. The old M113 Armored Infantry Carrier had straight, flat sides, while its replacement, the Stryker has the sides at somewhat of an angle, copying to some extent the design of the Soviet BTR-80 armored personnel carrier.

Why is this important to you? When you are planning your strong room, you need to look at the possible directions that the attackers could be coming from. If they have to come down a long hallway to reach a room that is on one side of that hallway, then they won't be shooting a full frontal shot at your armor; they'll be shooting a shot that can be deflected. On the other hand, if your room is at the end of the hallway, they will be doing a full frontal shot. Whatever armoring of your safe room that you do, needs to take this into consideration.

More than anything, your safe room needs access to your escape route or routes. This could be through an already existing door or window, or it could be a crawl hole that you make under a table or behind a bookcase. It really doesn't matter how you do it, just as long as you have an easy-to-use access to get to your escape route.

Remember, you're only going to have a minute at the most to get your whole family through that access and into your escape route. That means that it can't be anything too hard to navigate. At the same time, you want it hidden, so that casual visitors to your home don't have the opportunity to see it. Those same visitors might just end up being your attackers, if they get desperate enough.

The best escape hole is a tunnel; however, it's the hardest and most dangerous to build. Tunneling always carries the risk of a collapse, especially in wet areas, where the ground may not be all that stable. Another problem with tunnels is keeping them dry. If it rains a lot where you are, there's a good chance that your tunnel will fill with water, making it impassible or even causing it to collapse.

If you do decide to create a tunnel, be sure to put lots of support throughout its length. Ideally, you would bury corrugated metal tubing as your tunnel, but this requires excavating and backfilling to do. If you have a large, remote piece of property, this may be possible. But if you're in the city, it's impossible.

Here's something you need to know about how attacks work. Unlike the movies, where the enemy just keeps coming and coming until they overwhelm a strong point, most attacks come in waves. The attackers gather together, get up their nerve and attack. In the process of that attack, they'll learn something about your defenses and possibly even destroy some of them. Then, they'll regroup and come at you again, getting a little farther. This will keep happening until they win or they give up.

So, if you can manage to beat off the first wave of attack that happens inside your home, you'll have at least a few minutes of time until they attack again. That's useful time. While they are regrouping to attack once again, you can make your escape.

When planning the rest of your defenses, you want to make sure that you leave clear access for your escape. If that means driving your truck out of the driveway, then don't fill the driveway with junk that you have to drive through. If you have to put some sort of obstacles in the driveway, make sure that they are obstacles which you can drive over.

8. Self-Defense

Everything we've talked about up to this point are passive defenses. They are the things which you put into place, which don't require any action on your part to work. Although I've mentioned shooting the attackers several times, the focus has been on these passive defense.

There is no such thing as a passive defense system. All that it can do is delay your attackers, allowing you the chance that you need to react. That's valuable, as without that chance, you may end up dead before you have a chance to react. But, at some point in time, you're going to have to take up arms to provide some active defense of your home. In other words, you're going to have to shoot back.

Being able to shoot back effectively requires much more than just knowing how to get a good sight picture and squeeze the trigger. We talked about attitude earlier, which is an incredibly important part of the process; but even having the right attitude isn't enough. In addition to the mechanics of shooting the gun and the mental preparation to be able to take another human life, you also need to prepare yourself for what the Army calls "fire and maneuver."

You see, fighting is about much more than just shooting. Your enemies aren't going to stand still like paper targets for you, waiting for you to get a good sight picture and squeeze off your shot. They're going to be moving around, hiding behind things and trying to find a way to punch your ticket, before you can punch theirs. They'll likely come from directions you don't expect and do things you don't expect them to do, even with your carefully prepared obstacles and traps.

Yes, you need to be a good shot. Actually, you need to be an excellent shot, because when you're under attack and the adrenaline is flowing, you won't be shooting as good as you normally do. The best you can expect is to shoot at about half your normal level of accuracy.

In other words, if you can normally get a two inch group at 50 feet, you'd better be expecting to get a four or five inch group. That's still good enough to get

the job done, but not good enough for any fancy shooting. Forget about shooting the gun out of their hand or getting a head shot. Go for center mass and you'll have the best chance of success.

By the way, anyone that's worth shooting once is worth shooting five, six or even ten times. I recently read a story where a police officer put 15 rounds into a criminal, and the guy keep coming! He didn't just keep shooting, he kept walking as well!

Forget about that stuff you've seen in the movies, where one round from your trusty .44 will knock the bad guy through the wall. Real life isn't that way. People can soak up a lot of lead and keep coming, especially when they're pumped up on adrenalin or taking drugs. You've got to hit them somewhere vital to stop them with one shot.

Having said that, don't let yourself become so focused on the one guy you're shooting, that you don't see what else is going on around you. If you have multiple assailants and they see that you're focused on putting one of their number down, they may take that as an opportunity to get closer, flank you or sneak up behind you.

You don't know the situation you're going to be up against. You may have one attacker or many. You may not be where you expect to be when the attack happens. Instead of being where you usually are, you could be in the back yard, taking care of the chickens. You don't get to pick your battles, they come and pick you.

With that in mind, there are a couple of very important things you need to do. First of all, you need multiple weapons, hidden in multiple places around your house. The idea of just having one gun, which you keep hidden in your bedroom closet, is a waste of time. Unless you happen to be in the bedroom closet when somebody breaks into your home, that gun isn't going to do you any good.

Let me say something about safety here. One big concern about having firearms in the home is children. An unloaded, locked away firearm is a decoration, nothing more. Yet, many people are afraid to have firearms where children can reach them. That's a very real and very understandable concern.

The best way to keep your children safe from firearm accidents is to train them on the proper use of firearms. In times past, children were taught to shoot as soon as they were big enough to hold the rifle straight. A child who understands firearms isn't going to accidentally shoot their friend or sibling, because they also have an appreciation for how dangerous they are. Teach your children; that's the only way to make sure that they're really safe.

Children who are trained in firearm use and safety aren't going to go pull one of your guns out of its hiding place, unless they feel threatened by some danger. If that happens, thank God that you taught them what to do. Otherwise, they'll leave that gun hidden away; not thinking about it, even though they know it's there.

If things really get bad, the best thing you can do is to always carry a gun on you. That way, you'll always have something to use, while you're trying to get to your primary fighting position. If your main weapon is kept at or near your primary fighting position, then you won't have to run around looking for it.

Drills are an important part of prepping for defending your home. Military units, SWAT units and regular police forces practice constant drills, so that when they have to act, they can do so almost automatically, without having to think. All those hours of practice make it so that they can react instantly to any threat, without the need to think through what they are going to do.

You need to do the same for your home defense strategy. Shooting is a good starting point, but just punching holes in paper isn't enough. You need to practice drawing your gun quickly and smoothly, firing it from the hip and doing double taps. You also need to be used to shooting from just about any position

you can put yourself in. You may not be able to be in a Weaver stance to shoot, so you'd better be ready.

According to statistics, 70 percent of all times when a person with a concealed carry permit has to use their gun, the confrontation consists of three shots in three seconds. If you have to draw and bring your gun up to eye level, putting yourself in a good shooting stance, you're likely to be too late. There's a reason why people in the Old West learned to shoot from the hip; many dangers don't give you the time to shoot the way you want to.

That's why I'm a strong believer in laser gun sights. All of my guns have them, even my shotgun (I know that sounds a bit ridiculous). With laser sights on my guns, I can shoot them from the hip accurately, making it that much easier for me to use a fast draw effectively. In a case where a family member is near the line of sight of the bad guy, I don't want to have the risk of hitting the wrong one.

You also need to know how to move through a building, "clearing it." This is a standard police and military tactic for moving through a building room by room to find and eliminate all threats. If you can, take a tactical firearms course, so that you can learn how to do this properly. Then, practice applying those lessons in your own home, working together with other members of your team to move through your house, taking out bad guys.

Clearing rooms is always more effective if you work together as a team. One person alone can't look at an entire room, seeing and cataloging every threat. By working as a team, each can take responsibility for part of the room, reducing the time that any enemies have to react. Any extra team members can stay in the hall, guarding your back and making sure that the bad guys can't sneak into to the part of the building you've already cleared.

There's another practical aspect to this as well. By conducting these drills in your home, you have the opportunity to develop plans for how you will react to a number of different types of threats. While the most likely avenue of attack is

your front door, that isn't the only entryway. You might be attacked through the back door. Your drill for that would be different.

You need a plan for every possible contingency you can come up with, even those that seem unlikely. While you might put more effort into plans for the more obvious attacks, you don't want to be caught unawares by enemies that don't follow your script.

8.1 Weapons



Okay, so let's talk weapons. The first thing you have to develop an awareness of is that almost anything can be used as a weapon. In the movie Tomb Raider, Laura Kroft used a pneumatic chipping hammer as a gun, shooting screwdrivers at her assailants with air power. While I don't think that will really work, it illustrates the idea of looking at things as weapons. If she got down to hand-to-hand combat, those screwdrivers would actually make pretty good stabbing weapons.

While I'm a firm believer in firearms, I don't limit my thinking to them. I've got a crossbow hanging in my office as a backup weapon. There's a fighting knife under the seat of my car. I have various sticks, clubs and sharp objects all over the place; and woe to anyone who catches me in my workshop.

The thing is; firearms can break. They are notorious for jamming at just the wrong time, especially if you're shooting a lot. You can also run out of ammo really quickly. That cop I mentioned earlier that shot the guy 15 times, was almost out of bullets when the criminal finally went down. He was carrying the typical load of three magazines, and those were 17 round mags too. But, when all was said and done, he was down to just three rounds! Now, that same cop is carrying over 100.

Even if you practice strict fire control, you're going to go through a lot of rounds in an engagement. Most preppers say that you should have 1,000 rounds

of each caliber of ammo that you use. I won't argue with that; it's a good number. But if you end up in any prolonged battles to protect your home, you'll be amazed how much lead you go through.

8.2 Firearms



There's nothing you can legally buy that's going to beat a gun (or several guns) for protecting you and your family. The reason that the military still uses guns is that there's nothing else around which the average infantry soldier can use, which will inflict as much harm. So, even though they have much bigger weapons than guns, the main military weapon is still the gun.

The big decision you have to make is what type of gun or guns are you going to buy. While everyone has their own favorites, picking the right firearm to use in a given situation depends a lot on the situation you're faced with. So, let's take a look at the basic categories of firearms, so that we can see where they would be most useful.

Before we do that, let me clarify something that the media has been creating a lot of confusion about; automatic weapons. Automatic weapons are those that keep firing as long as you hold the trigger down. In other words, machine guns or sub-machine guns are automatic weapons, nothing else. However, most of the time that the media is saying "automatic," they really mean "semi-automatic." A semi-automatic firearm is one that chambers a new round and re-cocks itself, using the recoil of the gun as the motive force. You still have to pull the trigger again, to fire another shot.

Most firearms in the country today are semi-automatic. This includes almost all pistols, rifles and shotguns. While there are other means of chambering a round and cocking a gun, semi-automatic firearms are the most popular, simply because of their ease of use.

Rifles



The rifle is the most basic firearm there is. Available in a variety of calibers, they are the easiest firearm to learn to use, the most accurate to fire, and can be customized for a variety of purposes. The only problem with rifles is that they can be hard to use indoors. The length of a rifle, especially a hunting rifle, can make it

hard to maneuver in a home, looking for targets.

The rifle you choose depends a lot on the range you expect to be shooting at. Most hunting rifles make descent sniper rifles, especially if they have a good scope on them. The biggest advantage to most of them is their high power and greater accuracy, making it possible to shoot long ranges, with little drop in the bullet's trajectory.

Unless you have a large piece of property and are sure that people who are passing onto it are enemies, being a sniper may not be the best idea there is. Remember, there will probably be an "after" and you really don't want to be charged with murder.

Another time when a sniper rifle would be useful is if you are in the city and can establish a sniper perch in an adjacent building, perhaps across the street. This might be something you can do with a neighbor living in an apartment across the street, creating an agreement to act as snipers for each other, if needed.

For novices, a .22 rifle is the easiest thing there is to shoot. While a .22 doesn't do as much damage as a larger caliber gun, it's still a gun. It is possible to kill someone with one, although not as likely. The interesting thing about the .22 is that the bullet has a tendency to ricochet when it hits bone. So, a shot that hits the hip bone can be deflected up into the chest cavity, puncturing the liver or a lung. Likewise, a shot into an eye or temple will ricochet around the inside of the skull.

If you have some extra .22 rifles on hand, they provide an easy way for you to arm neighbors, especially neighbors that aren't used to handling firearms. At the same time, your more powerful guns give you an advantage over them.

Assault Rifles



The assault rifle is the standard infantry firearm. I need to clarify this here, as the news media has been making a lot of noise about assault rifles. Technically, what makes a rifle into an assault rifle isn't how it looks, it's how it works. You can take a .22 rifle that you'd teach a kid to shoot with, add a barrel shroud, pistol grip and a different stock, and the news

media would call it an assault rifle. The criterion they are using is that it "looks scary."

A true assault rifle is one that has fully automatic fire, in other words, a sub-machinegun. The M-16 rifle of the Vietnam War era was an automatic rifle, just like its younger cousin the M-4. These are available for purchase, as long as you can pass muster and pay the fee to get a collector's permit.

Assault rifles give you the advantage of being able to put a lot of fire downrange in a much shorter period of time. The design of the rifle is also easier to maneuver in the brush or in the home. Since they are generally a little bit shorter than hunting rifles, they are easier to use indoors, although not as easy as a pistol.

The advantage that assault rifles give is also their disadvantage. In the military, they teach soldiers to fire "three round burst." That means holding the trigger down just long enough for three rounds to fire, then releasing it. The reason for this is that recoil causes firearms to climb when fired on full automatic. So, the first round will go more or less where you point the rifle, the second will

hit several inches higher and by the third, you're probably just punching holes through the sky.

Personally, I don't like shooting on full automatic, even when using three round bursts. I want every round that I shoot to count, not to drill holes in the air. When I was in the Army, I had to carry all that ammunition. If I was going to carry it, I wanted it to do some good, not just be wasted making noise.

If you choose to buy an assault rifle, you'd better count of buying a lot of ammunition for it. A typical combat load for Special Forces is 300 rounds. That's one magazine in the weapon and 7 in their ammo pouches. If you're going to use up 300 rounds in one assault, you might end up going through a lot of ammunition before things get back to some semblance of normal.

If you're going to spend the money on a fully-automatic assault rifle, I recommend buying a "tactical red dot reflex" sight for it. This is a relatively new type of sight, which provides a red dot in the viewing reticule, to show where the gun is aimed. It is not a laser, which puts the red dot on the target; this red dot is only within the sight. As the gun moves from side to side or your eye moves from side to side, the sight adjusts, still showing you the point of impact of the round.

These sights are expensive, but worth it. They allow a shooter to sight in on a target much faster than the old iron sights. By eliminating the need to perfectly align the head, rear sight, front sight and target; the shooter can get on target faster, being more effective.

When shopping for a red dot sight, watch out for those designed for use on airsoft guns. While these look and act the same, they don't work as well. The flimsier materials mean that the sight won't stay adjusted properly for aiming your assault rifle.

Shotguns

The shotgun is my personal choice for a home defense weapon. A tactical shotgun is shorter than a rifle, making it possible to maneuver around a house. It packs a lot of firepower into a shot, much more than any pistol or rifle can do at

close range. It also provides a bit of spread to your shots, meaning that accuracy isn't quite as critical as it is with a pistol or rifle.



That's an important factor because you will be nervous. Your shooting won't be as good as normal, so you need every advantage you can get. The normal spread of the BBs in a shotgun shell will help make up for some of that nervousness.

Don't misunderstand me on this. Many people think that they can just point a shotgun in the general direction and it will destroy everything in front of it. If we're talking within the home, there's not enough distance to get much spread. The shot group will be limited to about the size of a baseball.

Shotguns are also excellent short-range outdoor weapons. When we were talking about defending your home, the area between your perimeter and your front door is most likely going to be under 100 feet. A shotgun works extremely well at that range, giving you an excellent weapon that can be used both indoors and outdoors. If you have to shoot more than a couple of hundred feet, you don't want to use a shotgun.

12 Gauge shotgun shells are available with a large variety of loads. The most common load for home defense is 00 Buckshot. The 00 BBs are about .32 caliber and there's a dozen of them in the shell. That makes for pretty good spread and punch. Some people load their shotguns by alternating 00 Buckshot with what is known as slugs. These shells have a single round ball the diameter of the shotgun's barrel. Slugs give a more powerful punch when needed, such as for causing serious damage to a car's engine.

There are also flechette rounds available for 12 gauge shotguns. These are little steel darts, about two millimeters in diameter. The darts provide more spread and more “bullets” in the spread. The only problem with them is that they cause more damage to the shotgun’s barrel than shot does.

Pistols



The last category of firearms and probably the most popular for home defense is the pistol. Actually, pistols can be broken down into two categories, revolvers and semi-automatics. Many people refer to semi-automatic pistols as automatics, but that’s technically incorrect, as they don’t fire on full automatic.

Historically speaking, revolvers have existed much longer than semi-automatics, mostly because the mechanism is much simpler. The advantage to that is that there is less to go wrong with them. So, in an emergency situation, where a gunsmith may not be available, there are advantages of having a revolver. On the other hand, revolvers are limited to six shots (although historically there have been revolvers that held as many as 12 rounds), whereas semi-automatics can come with magazines which carry up to 17 rounds, or an extended mag can be used, that holds up to 33.

The other advantage of a semi-automatic pistol is that changing out magazines is a matter of seconds, whereas recharging a revolver takes considerably more time. So, in a self-defense situation, the semi-automatic pistol gives you a distinct advantage. Remember the story about the cop who burned through three magazines defending himself?

Pistols are designed for use in short range situations only. The maximum effective range of a pistol is about 50 feet, unless it’s a competition pistol with a long barrel. A snub-nose’s maximum effective range is even less than that, about the length of a car.

That makes pistols ideal for use inside the home, but generally useless for outside the home. Even so, carrying a pistol gives you the ability to always carry a defensive weapon on your person, something that's not really practical with rifles and shotguns.

The other great thing about carrying a pistol is that it can also serve as a backup for your rifle if you run out of ammo or your rifle jams. While it may not have the capability of shooting at long range accurately, if you let your enemies get close, it will still ruin their day. So, even in a situation where you are defending your home from anyone entering it, having a pistol with you is a good idea.

The more extra magazines you can carry with you, the better. I carry three magazines as my standard load, one in the gun and two in mag holders. The only reason that I don't carry more is that it's inconvenient. However, if we were faced with a bug-out situation or I was expecting an attack, I would carry at least six.

Laser Sights



I am a firm believer in laser sights, for several reasons. First of all is the nervousness factor. You are going to be nervous if you have to defend your home. You may not notice it, because of all the adrenalin pumping through your system, but that doesn't mean it's not there. For that matter, adrenalin will make you shaky all by itself. As you probably already know, you can't shoot accurately while shaking.

The second benefit to lasers is that they make shooting from the hip much easier. A gun held at hip level or alongside the leg may not be seen by an adversary, giving you the advantage of surprise. However, the big advantage of shooting from the hip is one of speed. You can save as much as two seconds by drawing and shooting from the hip, over bringing the gun up to eye level in a normal shooter's stance. Those seconds could make all the difference.

When a laser sight is installed on a gun, it needs to be adjusted. They come with an Allen wrench for this, with both windage (side to side) and elevation adjustments. If the laser is removed from the gun and reinstalled, it will need to be adjusted again. This is no different than adjusting the iron sights on a gun.

While most lasers are still using a red light, there are now lasers with a green light. These are typically more expensive, because they are actually better. The green light lasers are about three times as bright as the red light ones, making them excellent for use in bright sunlight. If you can afford the extra cost for the green laser, it's worth it.

I have lasers on all my pistols and my shotgun. Some have tried to talk me into taking the laser off my shotgun, saying that it's ludicrous having a highly accurate sighting system on a shotgun. However, my intention is to shoot my shotgun from the hip, just like my pistols. For that reason, I'll keep my laser. With it, I can make sure that I'm actually pointing the shotgun at my assailants and not at someone else.

Suppressors



What most people refer to as “silencers” are actually suppressors. It is impossible to fully silence the sound made by a firearm, but it is possible to reduce it greatly. The degree to which it can be reduced depends upon more than anything on the speed that the bullet is traveling when it leaves the muzzle of the gun. Subsonic

rounds are much easier to suppress than supersonic ones.

For this reason, suppressors are basically used only with pistols and not rifles. However, there are a few assault rifles, such as the Heckler & Koch MP5, which have an integral suppressor in the barrel. (MP5s are not available for purchase to the civilian market, regardless of what sort of license you might have. They are only for military use.)

Suppressors work in basically the same way as a car's muffler. The majority of the sound that is made by a gun comes from the escape of the rapidly expanding gases from the burning of the gunpowder. The suppressor provides a place for the escaping gases to expand, reducing the amount of sound it makes.

Most people's knowledge of suppressors is limited to James Bond movies and other similar inventions of Hollywood. The distinctive "psst" those Hollywood suppressors make it much softer than the sound of a real one. In addition, the suppressor does nothing to mask the mechanical sound of the gun cycling to chamber another round, except in the movies, that is.

When used outdoors, a suppressor will limit the ability of anyone to hear the shot to a few dozen feet; in a noisy environment, much less. Inside a building, with the walls and ceiling to reflect the sound, it can be heard farther, although still much less distance than a shot without a suppressor.

While fairly simple to manufacture, it is technically illegal to make your own suppressor. Installing one requires the services of a skilled gunsmith or machinist. The barrel of the gun needs to be modified, internally threading it or installing grooves for bayonet lugs, depending upon the design of the suppressor that is going to be used with it.

There is an actual tactical advantage of using a suppressor. By reducing the noise signature of a shooting gun, it is possible to confuse an enemy as to where the shot is coming from. For this reason, many SWAT teams use the H&K MP5. In the case of home defense, whether or not it helps depends on a number of factors, such as where the shooting is happening, whether the assailant already knows where you are, whether they can see your muzzle flash, and how many people are shooting.

Nevertheless, if you have a firearm which can accept the installation of a suppressor, you may want to consider purchasing one. To legally do so, you will need the same sort of collector's license that is needed for the purchase of fully-automatic firearms.

8.3 Alternate Weapons

At the time of this writing, our Second Amendment rights to keep and bear arms are under serious attack. Obama and others have vowed to take our guns away, supposedly making the world a safer place. In reality, it's not about making anyone safer, it's about giving them total control.

Should they succeed, it will be disastrous for our country. In addition, it will be disastrous for many preppers plans for defending their homes. However, all is not lost, even if they do succeed. Mankind was killing one another long before the invention of the firearm. Ever since man first realized that sticks and stones could hurt, they have used anything they could find as a weapon.

So, should the gun grabbers get there way, and it becomes impossible to buy firearms and ammunition, there is a very real reason to have alternate means of defending yourself.

Bows



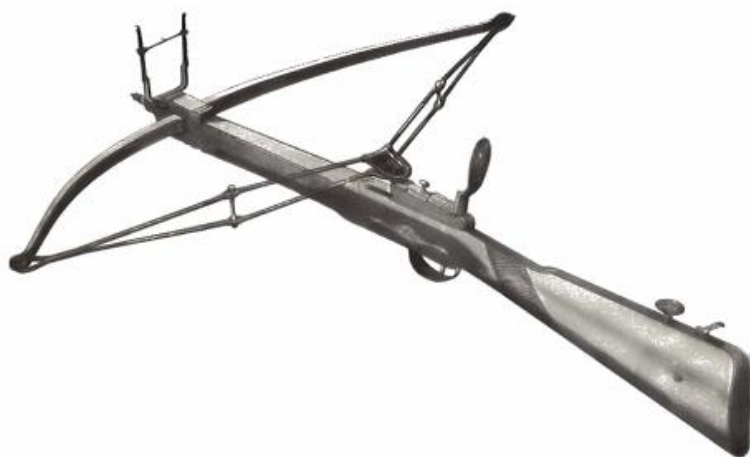
Bows were the most common distance weapon in use throughout the world for centuries. There are many things to like about the bow, as it is lightweight, accurate and can shoot a fair distance. With practice, one can become extremely accurate with one and even learn to shoot it rather rapidly. On top of all this, they have the advantage of being a silent weapon. Other than the “twang” of the bowstring, there's nothing to hear.

I personally like bows and if I were to find myself in a situation where I felt it was necessary to leave my home and go hunting for adversaries I would probably pick a bow over a rifle. To me, the advantage of being able to attack my enemies silently, without them knowing where the shots are coming from, surpasses the superior firepower of the rifle. Of course, I would take a sawed-off shotgun and a pistol with me for close work.

Most bow hunters will only use a bow to kill game at up to 40 yards, although the bow itself will easily kill out to double that distance. That makes it possible to use a bow for most outdoor home defense scenarios, although it isn't anywhere near as effective for use as an indoor weapon. The amount of space one needs for drawing a bow makes it almost impossible to use effectively indoors.

If you choose to buy a bow for a secondary weapon, then practice, practice, practice. You can't get good with a bow anywhere near as fast as you can with a rifle or even a pistol. This is a weapon which requires much more skill to use effectively; but with that skill, it can be quite effective.

Crossbows



The crossbow is the natural extension of the bow, taking the same principle and making it more powerful. They are also considerably easier to shoot accurately, as they are mounted to what is essentially a rifle stock. That allows putting a scope on them as well, making long shots all that more accurate.

The draw weight of a crossbow is considerably more than that of a bow, even some of the fancy compound bows. In medieval times, they were commonly referred to as armor piercing bows, for the greater penetrating power that they had. You can easily shoot 1000 feet with a crossbow; and do so accurately.

The big drawback to a crossbow is the amount of time that it takes to cock it for each shot. They come with a metal loop at the "muzzle" end, which you can put a foot into to draw it by hand. If you are strong enough, you might be able to do this. If not, you'll do like I do, and install a winch on it, to draw the string back

with a hand crank. While that works extremely well, it's slower than molasses in January. In fact, it's slow enough that I consider the crossbow a one-shot weapon in a home defense situation.

Knives



Knives have a great psychological impact on an adversary. Something about looking at a sharp piece of steel in an opponent's hand, knowing that it might be residing in your guts in a few minutes, is enough to make even the stoutest of heart waver.

Even so, using a knife effectively as a weapon is difficult. Unless you have had extensive training, don't think you can use one to defend yourself. Having said that, I still recommend having a knife. When everything else stops working, that knife might just take out your last adversary.

For a knife to be effective as a weapon it needs to be the right knife and it needs to be used the right way. True fighting knives are much different than hunting knives. Knives designed for hunting are single bladed, although some are sharpened partially down the back side. The best fighting knives are double-bladed, being sharpened down the whole of the back edge. This type of knife is known as the Fairburn, named for its inventor, Bruce Fairburn, who came up with the design while serving in China.

The advantage of the Fairburn style knife over other styles is the ease of penetration that it offers. It can also cut in both directions when slashing. These may seem like small differences, but in an actual knife fight, they can be enormous advantages.

True knife fighters always hold the knife low, with the point of the knife upwards. Stabbing someone from above is another Hollywood invention. The human body is fairly well armored for protection from stabs that come from above. Between the shoulder bones and the ribcage, the most that a stab from above can do is muscle damage. On the other hand, the human body has almost

no natural armor from stabs from down low. You can much more easily stab an enemy in the gut, causing serious damage, by stabbing from below.

Never try using a folding knife for a self-defense weapon. There's too much of a chance of it folding on your fingers, hurting you instead of your assailant. Even lock-blades can't be counted on, as there is always the possibility of accidentally triggering the lock.

Throwing Knives

Throwing knives has a lot of sex appeal, mostly because it's showy. However, as a means of self-defense, it doesn't hold much value. Hollywood has always shows victims who were attacked by a throwing knife as being hit in the chest or the back. Once again, the body's natural armor comes to the victim's aid. Considering how a throwing knife flips when it is thrown, it's almost impossible to penetrate the rib cage with one.



I learned how to throw knives years ago, thinking it would be useful for self-defense. That was before I realized how hard a target a human body really is. The only place that it would be effective to hit someone with a throwing knife would be the lower abdomen, hitting the stomach from the front, or the kidneys from the back. This greatly limits the utility of a throwing knife.

Swords

A sword can be a fearsome weapon in the hands of someone who knows how to use it. Of course, in our modern world, there are very few people who have any idea of how to use a sword effectively. Unless you are a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism, you have probably never held a real sword in your hands, let alone tried to hit an opponent with one.

Learning how to use a sword requires even more practice than learning how to use a bow or knife. Having said that, if I was up against an opponent armed with a knife, I'd rather have a sword in my hands. The greater reach of a sword does hold some advantage over a knife.

Using a sword requires an incredible amount of upper body strength. The soldiers of olden times, who were limited to the use of the sword, instead of an assault rifle, had to be incredibly strong, especially to manage to wield a sword for



an entire day's battling. Unless you are much stronger than I, you won't be able to use a sword for a prolonged engagement.

For most people, knives, swords and other such weapons are actually more of a liability than they are an asset. Their lack of ability to effectively use these weapons means that they are ineffective against their enemies. On top of that there is always the risk that the enemy can take the weapon away from you and use it against

you. For that reason, I don't recommend these weapons, except as a last resort, unless you have the time and resources to train in using them properly.

Sticks, Staves and Clubs



This category of weapons are referred to as "melee weapons" and can include anything that can be put on a stick, including axes and maces. The really great thing about this category of weapon is that it really doesn't require any training. Simply grab what's available and start swinging.

While you're not going to accomplish much against a pistol-wielding bandit with an axe or stick, you will against one who doesn't have a firearm. I saw an interesting demonstration once, done by people who were

experts in the use of medieval weaponry. One man with an axe was able to hold off four men armed with swords. His advantage was that he could just go wild with that axe, while his opponents needed to look for an opening in which to attack.

If it comes down to the point where an intruder gets into your home and comes at you, while you're unarmed, grab whatever is at hand and start swinging. If he's got a gun, you're not going to do real well, but if he's got a knife, you've got the advantage.

Throwing Stars

Throwing stars, more properly called "shuriken" are another weapon that Hollywood has glamorized. In the movies, people get killed by expertly thrown metal stars, thrown by some martial arts expert or other. In reality, it's almost



impossible to do more than cause a scratch with one.

The shuriken was invented as a distraction weapon. In other words, to distract someone long enough to run away. If a ninja was caught in the act, they would throw a couple of shuriken at whoever discovered them, and dive through the closest window to make their escape. Used in that way,

they are highly effective.

The other problem with shuriken is that it takes a lot of practice to become proficient enough to use them effectively. Having experimented with them, I know how hard it is to throw one accurately. If you've only got seconds to act, it's better to fill your hand with something that's going to be able to do your adversary some real harm.

Martial Arts Weapons

Most of the martial arts weapons started out as tools. In ancient times, farmers and artisans were forced to figure out how to use these tools as

weapons, as they were denied ownership of any real weapons. Used by an expert, they can be very effective, but used by an amateur, they're a good way of getting yourself hurt.



These weapons require lots of training and practice to use effectively. Swinging a pair of nunchuku (commonly called “nunchucks”) around to impress your friends isn’t going to prepare you to use them against anyone who manages to break into your home. When that happens, you’re more likely to hit yourself in the head, than you are to hit them.

As you can see, I’m not highly in favor of these as effective weapons. Having said that, I need to say that having anything in your hand is better than having nothing. Unless you are so highly trained in martial arts techniques that you can kill a person with your hands alone, you’re better off using almost anything, including these martial arts weapons. Besides, this way, you don’t hurt your hands.

Blowguns

The blowgun is another weapon that’s being touted to preppers as a great alternative. I remember buying a blowgun about 30 years ago. With a little practice, you can get quite good at them. We used to use a C-ration can as our target; the one that held the crackers. We’d make a target on it with magic marker and set it up at the other end of our Quonset hut.



If I understand correctly, the blowgun has its origins in Africa, although I believe that it was used in other parts of the world as well. Originally, it wasn’t a fighting weapon, but rather used for hunting. Poisons would always be used in conjunction with the darts, as blowgun darts don’t do a lot of harm.

Can a blowgun kill a man? Yes, it can, if used with the right sort of poison. If you don’t have the poison and aren’t good enough at sneaking around in the woods, it’s not going to do you much good. There are a lot

of better weapons out there, which you can use to defend yourself and your family. The blowgun, like the shuriken, is more of a novelty than an effective weapon.

Tasers

Electronic stun guns, commonly called “tasers” are becoming very popular. While they vary immensely, the main idea is to shock the attacker with a high-voltage, low amperage charge, overcoming their nervous system and causing them to lose control, collapsing to the ground. It doesn’t matter where you touch the taser to the assailant’s body, the effect is the same.



Tasers are a non-lethal weapon. It doesn’t matter how high the voltage is, it won’t kill them. The general consensus of opinion is that the higher the voltage the better, although that isn’t necessarily true. Let me clarify something here. High-voltages don’t kill

people, high amperages do. The amount of amperage that the taser provides is extremely limited, intentionally preventing the weapon from causing any permanent, serious harm.

The biggest problem with using a taser is that it is a contact weapon. That means that you’ve got to be within hand-to-hand range to be able to use one. At that range, they are very effective. So, if you find yourself in a position where you have to go at it, hand-to-hand with an enemy, they are nice to have.

With that in mind, the best sorts of tasers are the ones that you can hide in your hand. That allows you the greatest chance of catching your attacker unawares. Larger units, while quite effective, are much easier to see, giving the assailant an opportunity to try and avoid it.

Pepper Spray

Pepper spray is another great close range, disabling weapon. It creates an instant reaction, which is impossible to avoid. In fact, pepper spray is faster-acting

than tear gas, which is part of the reason that it has replaced tear gas as a self-defense weapon. The other part of the reason is that tear gas can cause permanent harm, while pepper spray can't.



To be used effectively, the pepper spray must hit the person in either the upper chest or lower face. You want them to breathe it in, because it doesn't accomplish much on the surface of their skin. As they breathe it in, they begin to cry and have difficulty breathing. This will not harm them; merely stop them from doing whatever it is that they were planning on doing.

Weapons like pepper spray and tasers need to be used in conjunction with other weapons. They only incapacitate the assailant for a time. Before their effect has an opportunity to wear off, you either need to use a different weapon on them, or restrain them in some way.

8.4 Unconventional Weapons

I've said it enough times that you're probably getting tired of hearing me say it, but with the right mindset, anything can be a weapon. People who think weapons see ways that things can be used for fighting, even if they are not intended to be weapons.

Have you ever seen a Jackie Chan movie? That guy uses anything that comes to hand. I've even seen him use a stepladder effectively. Granted, that's a movie and not very realistic. Nevertheless, it illustrates my point. The characters that Jackie plays know how to improvise with what they have available, utilizing the most unusual items as either defensive or offensive weapons.

Since we're talking home defense, you've got an advantage over any attacker. You know what's in your home and you've had time to think about how you could use it as a weapon, should the need arise. Make use of that time; don't wait till you're under attack to think of what you could use. Plan ahead.

Many of these improvised weapons don't kill an assailant, but they will cause them to stop coming at you. That's an involuntary reaction on their part, so they really can't prevent themselves from doing so. If you use any of these, you need a backup plan to go with the weapon, whether it's to run, to restrain them with plastic handcuffs or to grab a weapon to put them down permanently.

Flare Gun



The first time I heard about this one, it gave me a good chuckle. Then I started thinking about it; and then I bought one. People have an innate fear of fire. I don't know if it's something instinctive or something we learn as babies from touching the hot stove after our mothers tell us not to. Regardless of where it comes

from, that fear is useful; because it can be used against people.

A flare gun is made of plastic, so if you're going to use one, you need to paint it black. Something about the bright orange plastic doesn't make it look all that convincing as a weapon. But once painted, you really can't tell what it is. It looks like a fairly normal revolver, except that it doesn't have a rotating cylinder.

This is a terror weapon, pure and simple. The flare pistol uses a special flare which comes packed in a 12 gauge shotgun shell. When fired at someone, you're essentially shooting fireballs at them. If you hit them, you'll not only freak them out, but anyone else that's with them.

Wasp Spray

Believe it or not, there are places in the country where it's illegal to carry pepper spray. But as far as I know, there's no place where it's illegal to carry bug spray. This can even be carried in countries where it's illegal to go around armed, although you can't take it on the airplane with you. Canned wasp spray has a special nozzle, which allows it to shoot about 20 feet, making it a longer-range weapon than regular pepper spray.

While it won't kill a person, wasp spray is an extreme irritant. The only risk is that it can cause respiratory problems. But, then again, a bullet in the chest causes some rather severe reparatory problems as well. I would avoid going for the eyes, and shoot the person in the upper chest, so that they breathe in the fumes. Of course, if they don't stop right away, move your aim up and go for the face.

Bear Spray



Bear spray is essentially concentrated pepper spray, which is designed to give a mega-dose to the bear. As such, it's much more effective against humans than regular pepper spray. It causes instant breathing problems, coughing and severe watering of the eyes, essentially incapacitating the person in one to two seconds.

There is no permanent damage from pepper spray, but it will wear off in a while. Being in the fresh air or moving air helps it to dispel more rapidly, reducing the effective time of incapacitation. There is also a risk of you becoming incapacitated if you breathe it in. Not only do you need a good aim when using it, so that you don't shoot it in your own face, but you need to be careful when going to put the plastic cuffs on your assailant, so that you don't breathe it in.

Torch

A torch is another psychological fire weapon. While not as effective as a flame thrower, at close range, it's going to make people wary. They may not stop their attack, but they will try and avoid the flame. This is a purely defensive weapon, which cannot effectively be used to attack an assailant.

Hair Spray

Speaking of flame throwers, a spray can of hair spray makes a great improvised flame thrower. Hair spray is highly flammable and comes out of the

can in a spray mist, which will form a nice fireball in front of the can. You'll need a lighter to ignite it, but once ignited, it will keep burning as long as you hold the trigger down.

Hair spray isn't the only thing that can be used this way; many kinds of spray paint are highly flammable as well, especially enamels. You might want to do a little experimenting to see what you have that can be used as an effective flame thrower.

Bright Light

I actually got this idea from what the bad guys are doing. It seems that break-in artists are now using bright strobes to disorient and incapacitate their victims. If you've ever had a flash photo taken of you in a dark room, you know how hard it is to see anything afterwards. Well, imagine that same flash going off three times a second and not stopping. That would really make it hard to see your assailant, let alone do anything to them!

Many tactical flashlights and gun-mountable lights have a strobe function for this very reason. With a bright strobe flashing in their face, most people can't react well. At an absolute minimum, their reactions are slowed. In some cases, their reaction is limited to putting up their hands, as if to ward off the light.

As far as I know, Streamlight makes the brightest tactical flashlight on the market. Their ProTac-HL has an amazing 600 lumens! That's bright enough that the steady light can stun you in the lighting of an average home or office. When in flashing mode, it totally incapacitates anyone it's shined at, at least for as long as it is pointing at their eyes. The light's on switch allows you to select high beam, low beam, or flashing, per your need at the moment. The only problem is that for a flashlight it's pretty expensive.

High Pressure Water

Police have used fire hoses more than once for controlling an angry mob. The high pressure stream of water not only stops them in their tracks, but in some cases actually can knock them down.

If you are one of the lucky people who has a fire hydrant in front of your house, you could use that as some heavy artillery, especially in a mob type attack. This could very easily become part of your neighborhood defense plan, with



whoever is on watch at any time being the prime operator for the hose.

It's possible to buy four inch fire hose on the internet and the right nozzles to go with it. Be ready though, this is an expensive purchase, as expensive as buying a gun. Don't forget that you'll need a big wrench to turn on the hydrant as well.

This makes a great weapon for use against an angry mob coming down your street to attack your home or neighborhood.

While not as effective, a pressure washer can be used against individuals, in the same way that a fire hose is used against a mob. The range isn't as great, nor is the stream as strong, but it is still effective due to the pressure. Anyone being hit by the stream of water is going to find it difficult to do whatever mischief they had set out to do.

Hot Liquids

This is another weapon that goes back to medieval times. In the gatehouse of the castles of the day, it was common to have the means available to pour boiling oil down on the heads of those who were attacking the gate. The hot oil would burn the attackers, reducing their ability to attack. The reason that oil was used is that oil has a very high boiling point. So, if boiling oil is poured down on people, it will inflict serious harm, even without being lit on fire. For extra emphasis, a flaming arrow could always be shot down into the hot oil, burning everyone in the attack.

I don't really recommend pouring boiling water on anyone, and especially don't suggest that you light it afire. While I believe that you have the right to do anything within your power to protect your family, I don't want you to do something that would put your family and home at risk. With the construction of

most American homes, if you lit that oil on fire, there's a good chance of burning your house down. That negates any advantage that it might have as a weapon.

However, there's no reason why you can't pour boiling hot water down on any attackers. While the boiling point of water is nowhere near as high as that of oil, it also doesn't have the fire risk. Oil boils at somewhere between 375 and 510 degrees F, while water only boils at 212 degrees F. Nevertheless, 212 degrees is hot enough to cause some nasty burns.

The only problem with using boiling water or boiling oil is that you need a lot of it, and a place where you can drop it down on your attackers. If your home has a balcony over the front door, that might be an ideal place to use it from, especially if you build a trap door into the balcony. Otherwise, a second floor window would work as an attack point.

Don't bother with this unless you can boil at least five gallons of water at a time. You want to burn them enough to deter them, not just enough to make them angry at you. That means a lot of water.

Anything You Can Grab

When all else fails, grab whatever you can get your hands on, a frying pan, cane, picture hanging on the wall, a book, or a tool. You're going to be more effective hitting an assailant with something in your hand, than you are in hitting them with a bare hand.

Throwing things at an intruder can deter them as well, although the chance of doing them any serious harm is minimal. All you are going to accomplish is to gain a delay of a couple of seconds, while they dodge whatever you have thrown at them. That may give you a chance to grab a more effective weapon, or to run away to a place where you have a weapon prepared.

8.5 A Word About Hand-to-Hand Combat

If you have any sort of martial arts training, more power to you. However, most martial arts training today has too much focus on making a good show and fighting in competitions. It may or may not be effective when used to defend

yourself from an aggressor. Besides, no matter what level of black belt you have, it's easily trumped by a guy with a pistol, who stays out of your range.

Of all the martial arts forms, the Israeli system of Krav Maga is the most effective. That's because it was developed for use purely as a means of self-defense, with no intention of using it in tournaments or for show. The goal of Krav Maga is to end the fight as quick as possible, with you as the victor.

A key element of Krav Maga is that it focuses on hitting the most vulnerable parts of an assailant's body. This isn't fighting fair, if anything you want to eliminate any element of "fair" from the fight. As far as you're concerned, fair means that you win the fight without injury and your family is protected. With that in mind, go for the most vulnerable part of your attacker's body. You want to put them down as fast as possible, before they can put you down.

To put that another way... fight dirty. Anything you ever learned about the gentlemanly way to fight needs to be tossed out the window. This is the real thing, and dirty tricks are more likely to help you than anything else. Make good use of them and go for vulnerabilities:

- Groin – do I really need to explain?
- Eyes – people do amazing things to protect their eyes
- Nose – causes the eyes to water, impeding vision. A good enough blow will cause the nose to bleed, impeding their ability to breathe
- Hair – not only painful, but a great handhold to control your enemy
- Throat – one of my personal favorites. A blow to the front of the neck can crush the trachea impeding their ability to breathe, even to the point of death. A blow to the side of the neck interrupts blood flow to the brain, reducing their thought clarity
- Temple – a hard blow to the temple can disorient or render unconscious
- Ears – slapping the ears, especially with a cupped hand, can rupture eardrums, causing disorientation and loss of equilibrium

- Solar plexus – this is a classic fighter’s blow. Hit just below the sternum and you can make them lose their breath and even momentarily paralyze their ability to breathe
- Kidneys – a strike to the kidneys is extremely painful
- Knees – the knee is fairly strong from the front, but not from the side. It takes very little sideways force on the knee to break or dislocate it. I learned this from personal experience

Never fight angry. The people who win fights are those that keep their cool about them and plan their blows. Flailing at your opponent and seeing how many times you can hit them will serve nothing more than to wear yourself out and hurt your hands. Hitting them a few times in these vulnerable areas will put them down quickly, providing you with the victory.

9. Other Considerations

As you can see from all that we've covered so far, there's a lot to do to properly protect your home. On top of all this, the whole situation is complicated by trying to avoid making your home look like an armed camp. I've often thought of how much easier it would be to protect my home if I didn't have to keep it looking like a normal home in suburbia. Of course, having an unlimited budget to work with would be nice as well.

You and I face the same challenge that an infantry platoon leader faces on their first field training exercise. We know the theory, but we have to put it into practice. We've got to take all the myriad of details that we learned in Infantry Officer's Basic and put them together into a defensive plan that will protect our troops (family). We've only got one chance to get it right, because unlike that second lieutenant on a training exercise our troops don't get back up and quit playing dead when it's all over.

There are a few other important issues that I want to bring up, which I think are an important part of your home defense preparations.

9.1 Personal Body Armor

Pretty much everything we've talked about has been from the viewpoint of you shooting at whoever is trying to attack your home. You won't be the only one shooting though. You can be assured that whoever is trying to attack you will be shooting as well, and they won't care about what God or the law says about murder.

You're the defender here, which actually puts you at a disadvantage. The attacker can always choose the time of attack, which gives them the advantage. To counter this, you need to do everything you can to develop a defensive plan that covers everything you can come up with, even the unlikely. You also need to buy a few seconds of time, in order to put your plan into effect. That's why we talked so much about having a layered defense and defense in depth; to buy you that time.

There are a few things that the attacker has going against them as well. First of all, they have to expose themselves in order to attack. You can hide within your home, or behind a wall of sandbags, keeping them from being able to shoot you easily. They can't do that. Even the junk cars you parked in your front yard to act as a barrier will only offer them limited protection, and they can't storm your house from behind them.

The other thing that they have going against them is that they probably aren't good shots. Don't count on that, because the price of finding out their shooting ability might be a little too costly. At the same time, don't totally discount it either. There will probably be a lot of lead flying your direction, that won't do much of anything.

There's something else you need, and that is to keep from getting shot yourself. I'm sorry, I can't offer you a magic cape that makes you immune to bullets, knives and stones. There really is no such thing.

The best I can offer is personal body armor. Back when I was walking in the jungle of Vietnam we wore flak jackets. Those were fairly good, but really nothing compared to what we have today. The body armor used by today's troops makes those old flak jackets look like nothing.

The nice thing is that this body armor is available to the public. Not only that, but it's much more affordable than it was in the past. While I wouldn't call body armor cheap, I would say that it's within the range of affordable.

You can buy your armor in either camouflage or tactical black. Unlike the "bullet resistant" vests of the past, these don't rely only upon Kevlar, but also on ceramic and fiberglass plates. The combination of Kevlar and these plates makes the armor much more effective.

Generally, you have to buy the vest and then buy the plates separately. There are a total of four plates, covering the front, back and sides of your torso. Keep in mind that all this is doing is protecting your vital organs; it's not going to make you impervious to gunfire. They can still incapacitate you by hitting you in

the arms and legs. If they are good shots, they can kill you outright with one shot to the head.

Part of what makes Kevlar so effective is that it is used in stacked sheets. That means that a bullet has to penetrate each sheet individually. With the sheets stacked and no space in between them, this is very hard for a bullet to do.

The same effect can be accomplished with six inches of thickness of phone books or newspapers. Yes, that's right; you can actually make body armor out of old phone books and newspapers, although it will be rather heavy and awkward to move around in it. This will provide enough protection to stop a handgun bullet, although it won't stop a high power rifle bullet.

One last thing you need to know about body armor. It stops the bullet from penetrating, but all that kinetic energy has to go somewhere. That somewhere is into your body. Getting hit in body armor is likely to knock you down, even if it doesn't penetrate your body. If you are hit in the chest, you can count on it knocking the wind out of you as well. There's even a fairly good chance that it will crack a few ribs.

9.2 Situational Awareness

Situational awareness is exactly what it sounds like, maintaining awareness of your situation, or more specifically, the situation around you. The price for safety is often continual vigilance. This needs to happen on both the individual and team level. Every member of your family or your neighborhood needs to be constantly aware of what is happening around you and any threats that are approaching.

Part of situational awareness comes from having lookouts and patrols watching the area around your home. However, that isn't enough. Even while working, each team member needs to stop every few minutes to take a good look around them.

The pioneers who filled wagon trains going west knew the price of poor vigilance. The land around them was filled with dangers, including roaming bands

of Indians who would love to have the things in their wagons. For them, the price of losing situational awareness was losing their lives.

That's the same price your family faces, if you are unable to maintain situational awareness in your situation. Anyone who wants to attack you isn't going to wait for a time that's convenient for you, they're going to use a time that's convenient for them. If they can figure out your schedule, they'll seek out a time which is the most inconvenient for you.

How well they do this depends a lot on how smart they are. The first and most important rule of combat is reconnaissance; find the enemy and don't let them find you. While some individuals or groups will attack you as a target of convenience, most will see your preparations and look for the best possible time. They will watch you to determine your schedule, how many of you there are, how your defenses are laid out, and when you would be the most vulnerable to attack.

Therefore, situational awareness doesn't just mean watching for an impending attack; it also means watching to see who might be watching you. Often, the first sign of an impending attack is the people that they put in place to surveil the target. If you can spot that person, you eliminate their element of surprise.

Really good situational awareness often only comes about as the result of a bad experience. A woman who has been raped becomes distrusting of men in general, and looks at every man as a potential rapist. She has learned vigilance, but at a horrible cost.

You can't afford to have your family pay that kind of cost. You need to instill situational awareness in them, without making anything like that happen. The best way to do that is through training. Have training exercises with your family, in which you have an aggressor try and enter your home. Just be sure that all the guns are unloaded and the bullets hidden away before doing this. After a few exercises where your family doesn't see the aggressor in time, they'll begin to learn, becoming more aware of what is going on around them.

Another good way to teach your family situational awareness is by walking through areas that your family doesn't know, observing. Afterwards, ask them questions about the area that you walked through, such as:

- Were there more men or women?
- What was the average age of the vehicles?
- How did people move on the street?
- How many red cars did you see?
- What potential escape routes did you see?
- What dangers were there in that area?

This can become a fun game that you play with your kids, helping develop their situational awareness. As they get better, come up with harder questions for them, even scenarios that they might have to accomplish if they were acting as spies.

9.3 Communications

Communications and situational awareness go hand-in-hand. It doesn't do you much good for one family member to be aware of an approaching threat, and the rest of the family not know about it. The first gunshot is not a good way to find out what is happening.

In the case of a pending attack you need some sort of alarm system in place, which everyone on your team will understand. It has to be loud enough to be clearly heard by everyone, while hopefully not allowing the enemy to know what's going on. Ideally, you'll have a series of alarms, each of which denotes something different, such as:

- Someone spying on your home
- Single person approaching the home – does not appear violent
- Group approaching the home – does not appear violent
- Single person approaching the home – appears violent
- Group approaching the home – appears violent
- All clear

Communications becomes even more important if you actually have to enter into combat to protect your home. Every team member needs to know what every other team member is doing, where they are and what they see. There are only two effective ways to accomplish this, with runners or with radios.

If you are going to buy radios for use in defending your family, then make sure that you put in a good stock of batteries as well. If you can buy multi-channel, voice activated ones, that's even better. Voice activated radios provide the ability to keep your hands free for fighting, while you are communicating with one another. This helps ensure good communications, even in the thick of battle.

Keep your radios in a faraday cage for protection. While we have no idea of the likelihood of an EMP attack, the possibility does exist. By storing your radios in a faraday cage, you protect them from that possibility, just in case.

You can make a faraday cage out of any metal box, such as a portable metal file box. Insulate the inside of the box with something to ensure that the radios don't touch the metal and put them inside. Seal the box shut, so that it can't come open accidentally, while still being fairly easy to open in an emergency. This is enough to protect your radios, ensuring that you have them should the need arise.

Police and military forces use the "ten code" to communicate with each other. This is verbal shorthand for common things that need to be said by police officers. Many of the commands are useful to you, in your home defense. I have removed those that are strictly involved with police work and don't have anything to do with your defensive needs from this list.

- 10-0 Caution
- 10-1 Unable to copy -- change location
- 10-2 Signal good
- 10-3 Stop transmitting
- 10-4 Acknowledgement (OK)
- 10-5 Relay
- 10-6 Busy -- stand by unless urgent

- 10-7 Out of service
- 10-8 In service
- 10-9 Repeat
- 10-10 Fight in progress
- 10-12 Stand by (stop)
- 10-14 Prowler report
- 10-15 Civil disturbance
- 10-18 Quickly
- 10-19 Return to ...
- 10-20 Location
- 10-22 Disregard
- 10-23 Arrived at scene
- 10-24 Assignment completed
- 10-25 Report in person (meet) ...
- 10-26 Detaining subject, expedite
- 10-30 Unnecessary use of radio
- 10-31 Crime in progress
- 10-32 Man with gun
- 10-33 Emergency
- 10-34 Riot
- 10-35 Major crime alert
- 10-37 (Investigate) suspicious vehicle
- 10-38 Stopping suspicious vehicle
- 10-41 Beginning tour of duty
- 10-42 Ending tour of duty
- 10-44 Permission to leave ... for ...
- 10-50 Accident (fatal, personal injury, property damage)
- 10-52 Ambulance needed
- 10-59 Convoy or escort
- 10-60 Squad in vicinity
- 10-61 Isolate self for message

- 10-62 Reply to message
- 10-63 Prepare to make written copy
- 10-64 Message for local delivery
- 10-65 Net message assignment
- 10-66 Message cancellation
- 10-67 Clear for net message
- 10-69 Message received
- 10-70 Fire
- 10-71 Advise nature of fire
- 10-72 Report progress on fire
- 10-73 Smoke report
- 10-74 Negative
- 10-75 In contact with ...
- 10-76 En route ...
- 10-77 ETA (estimated time of arrival)
- 10-78 Need assistance
- 10-85 Delayed due to ...
- 10-89 Bomb threat
- 10-93 Blockade
- 10-95 Prisoner/subject in custody

Your kids will probably think it's pretty cool learning the same 10 codes that the police use. For them, it will be a game, although a pretty useful one, should the situation arise where you need to defend your home.

9.4 Family Tactical Teamwork

Let me settle one thing here and now... your name isn't Rambo. If you think you are going to be effective taking out a group of armed assailants by yourself, you'd better think again. Unless you have some incredible training and your opponents are incompetent, all you're going to accomplish with that attitude is to get yourself killed.

Granted, there are some people in the military that are sufficiently well trained that they can take on a number of armed assailants by themselves, and win. Even so, they might pick up a little lead themselves in the exchange. Anyone sufficiently well trained to do that, will also know the risks of trying.

In the Old West, individual families often had to protect themselves. That generally meant the man of the house doing the fighting against a band of attacking Indians. Even though he might have done all the fighting, that doesn't mean he did it on his own. Usually, his wife was there as well, loading his guns for him, so that he could concentrate on shooting. The children were stationed at windows and spy-holes, watching to see if anyone was sneaking up on them from behind. In other words, the family worked together.

Your chances of victory are much better if you develop a plan in which each family member takes part in defending the home. You also need to figure out how to modify the plan, in the case that one family member is injured or absent. This is important. The reason that an infantry platoon leader doesn't fight alongside his troops is so that he can control his platoon. The most important part of that is to plug holes in the platoon's defenses, as people become injured.

It might be that you are the only one who can shoot a gun accurately. If that's the case, then you will probably end up doing most of the shooting. But that doesn't mean that your family should just cringe and hide in the closet. Put them to work as part of your defensive plan as well. While you're dealing with the enemy, have them go through the house, barring the door, ensuring that the deadbolts are thrown, setting up barricades, and putting any traps into effect.

Always make sure that you have an armed rear-guard. Keeping you occupied from the front, while some other enemies sneak in from behind is the oldest trick in the book. Don't let your family fall for it. Even if that person can't fire effectively, being able to fire at the enemy will slow them down, while alerting the rest of the family to the attack.

Hopefully, you've taught your family to shoot. That way, it's not all up to you. While you might be in the front position, having other family members

shooting increases your chances of survival and victory. Take the time to teach each of them, and give them time to become proficient. Make sure that they each have their own guns as well, so that they are comfortable shooting with the gun that they will end up using.

Be sure to practice as well. Practice drills are just as important to your family as they are to police departments and military organizations. Not only do they prepare everyone for what needs to be done, but they give you a chance to find any holes in your defensive plan, before it has to be put into effect. Better to find out before an emergency arises, so that you have time to fix any faults.

9.5 Know When to Bug-Out

Regardless of how good you prepare and how well you defend your home, there may very well come a time when it's not possible to defend it any longer. The military term for this is that your "position is no longer tenable." That means that it's no longer possible to defend the position. This may be because you run out of ammo or because there are more attackers than you can deal with. Regardless of the reason, you need to be able to recognize that moment before it arrives.

The last thing you want to do is to have your whole family killed, trying to defend your home. No matter what you have in there, the lives of your loved ones are worth more. You can leave, even leaving everything behind. While it may be difficult to survive without the things you have in your home, difficult is better than dead.

Part of prepping is to have a bug-out plan, including caches of supplies, bug-out bags and a planned escape route. Knowing when to put it into effect is the hardest decision any prepper has to make. For some, it's early, while for others it's rather late. However you make that decision, you want to make sure that you do it in such a way that you can get your family out of your home and to a place of safety, before it's too late.

That's not to say that you totally abandon your home. You may decide to come back and throw out your invaders. But to do that, you have to survive. So, you have to bug out before it's too late.

While you are free to disagree with me, I'd say that "before it's too late" is defined as before any family member gets wounded. It's more or less impossible to predict when that's going to happen, but it's usually extremely clear when the likelihood increases. You need to be aware of that and put your bug-out plan into effect.

Breaking free from an engagement is best accomplished when your enemy falls back to regroup before attacking again. At the same time, falling back may actually be running away, so you want to watch to see what they do. If they only run a couple of hundred feet, then hunker down behind some cars, you can be pretty sure they'll be back. However, if they run and keep on running, you might have won the battle.

Let's say that they have broken into your home, but you managed to beat them off. As they leave, you notice that they only go about three houses away, then gather together. If they start gathering together, they're probably going to start planning another attack. As they have already breached your perimeter and your home's defenses, you can be sure that the next attack will get farther. In other words, you're going to get down to the point of hand-to-hand combat.

If that's the situation you find yourself in, it's definitely time to make good your escape. While one family member keeps an eye on the enemy, the rest need to put the bug-out plan into effect. Take that opportunity as an opportunity to escape, before it's too late.

Remember, even if they were at the point of giving up, you don't know that. As long as your family gets out alive and safe, you can afford to lose everything in your home. You're alive, so you won. That's what matters.