CHAPTER 5 - #4 NEED - HOME DEFENSE

THE COMPLETE STEP-BY-STEP SYSTEM TO GUARANTEE YOUR SURVIVAL
Chapter 5 - #4 Need - Home Defense

Household Homeland Security

No matter how much you do to stockpile and prepare for a disaster, it's not going to do you the least bit of good if someone else comes along and takes it from you. While that may not happen to you, your security is not an assumption you can afford to make. There are plenty of people around who live off of others and when things fall apart, you'll see them coming out of the woodwork.

We can see this happen pretty much any time there is a natural disaster. Looters and others try to take advantage of the situation, stealing what they can. How much worse would that be if those looters didn't have any food to eat and the only food available was what you have?

The thing is that we really don't know what's coming down the pike. Desperate people do desperate things; and if a scenario arises that cuts off food supplies, you can count on at least some of those desperate people doing just about anything they can to survive. For some, that will mean begging. Others may turn to cannibalism if things get bad enough. Typically there are women who will sell their bodies for food. But amongst all the other actions that desperation causes, there are those who turn to violence to get what they need.

There are a number of different scenarios which are likely to cause a breakdown of society, such as widespread epidemic, biological warfare or an EMP. In those cases, we can't count on the police being there to take care of us. Oh, there may be some police around, but the number of violent gangs will probably overwhelm the police forces. Those that practice evil see the police as an enemy. In a survival situation, that would make the police prime targets for these people.

The only one you can count on being there to protect your home is yourself. Actually, better than just depending on yourself, your chances of survival will be better if you have a survival team. That team can consist of just your family, but to do so, your family members will need to be able to participate in survival tasks, such as the defense of your home.

Defenses are broken down into two groups; passive defenses and active defenses. Passive defenses are the things you put into place, in order to make it harder for the bad guys to break into your home. A locked door is a passive defense; albeit not a very good one. But it's better than leaving a hole in the wall. Passive defenses won't ever stop a determined attacker. All they can do is to slow that attacker down a bit, giving you time to get ready to defend your home.

That's where active defenses come into play. Those are the things that you do yourself to battle the bad guys. In other words, taking up arms to defend your home and family. That's what's going to stop them and keep your family safe.

Before going any farther, let me say something important here. Guns are the great equalizer. If you are caught having to defend your home, you don't want to have to depend on martial arts tactics or pepper spray. Those are only useful when protecting yourself from people armed at the same level. While you might survive an attack by a knife-wielding thug with your pepper spray, you probably won't survive an attack by the same thug when he has a gun in his hand.
Defensive Tactics

Defending your home means more than just having a gun and knowing how to pull the trigger. Yes, you should have a gun; better yet, have several guns. But you need more than that; you need to prepare your home and your survival team to ward off a determined attack by a hungry gang. That requires using some basic defensive tactics.

Tactics are simply the concepts that we use to defend ourselves. They are the same concepts that the military uses, simply because they work. Your challenge will be in applying these basic tactics to your home or neighborhood.

Cover and Concealment
These two words are often confused, but both are important. Cover means something you can hide behind, while shooting, to prevent the bad guys from being able to shoot you. It has to be strong enough to stop a bullet. Concealment is just something you can hide behind to keep the bad guys from finding you. It isn’t strong enough to stop a bullet. Obviously, cover is better than concealment.

Defense in Depth
The concept of defense in depth is to use whatever space you have to your advantage. If you live in the city, this may be a hard concept to put into practice, but if you have some acreage outside of town, it will work well for you. In town, you would have to work together with your neighborhood, in order to create a true defense in depth.

The idea is to trade space for time; but to do so on your terms. As an enemy attacks, you make a number of hit and run attacks or guerilla warfare attacks on them, trimming down their numbers, without allowing them to trim down yours. This is best accomplished by using a series of ambushes.

By the time the enemy reaches the point where a decisive engagement has to be made, there will be two results from your hit and run tactics, both of which will help you. First of all, you’ll have trimmed down their numbers somewhat. Secondly, they will have spread out, allowing you to engage part of their force at a time, maximizing the effectiveness of whatever firepower you have.

In an urban situation, you can do this by blocking off your street, setting up a series of roadblocks. As the bad guys reach each roadblock, they come under attack. Before they can break through and get to a good attack position, they will put themselves into a good ambush position, allowing you and your neighbors the advantage.

Layered Defense
Many people confuse a layered defense and a defense in depth, thinking they are one in the same. While there is a lot of similarity between the two, they are in fact different. The confusion comes from the fact that the two concepts are often used together. A layered defense means that you have several different defensive positions to use, each of which allows you to attack the enemy again, as you slowly retreat along a pre-chosen path.

When I was talking about a series of roadblocks for a defense in depth in an urban environment, I was actually talking about a combination of the defense in depth and a layered defense. Each roadblock became a separate layer, which the enemy has to conquer before they can move on.
You should have a layered defense on your own property, even if you are living in suburbia. Besides anything that you do as a neighborhood, your outer defensive layer is your property line. Create a perimeter there that they have to breach. This will prove their hostile intent, helping you to maintain the legal and moral high ground. Your second layer is the exterior of your home, which should be hardened to make it difficult to break in. Finally, you should have a room in your home which you have prepared for making your last stand before escaping. That's your last layer.

**Deter and Delay**
The people who are coming to attack you are probably not rocket scientists. In fact, if they are criminals, there's a good chance that they aren't all that well educated at all. They are also probably a bit on the lazy side; that's why they are attacking you to take what you have, rather than working to get what they need on their own. While some may just be desperate, especially in the aftermath of a disaster, true criminals tend to be lazy.

Anything you can do to deter them, making it harder for them to get into your home and get what you have, will work to your benefit. Every minute longer it takes them to defeat you or to break into your home, is one more minute in which they can give up. Take advantage of that, building things to make it hard enough for them to break in, that it will cause them to turn around and go elsewhere.

Many of the things I am going to recommend in this chapter are done with this goal in mind. I want you to make your home hard enough to break into, that it ends up taking away their steam and makes breaking into some other home seem like a better idea. At the same time, I want you to be well enough prepared to defend your home, that they will see that you're not going to be intimidated by their guns and are in fact ready to fight them. Between the two, you will hopefully be able to deter them enough so that you come out victorious.

**The Prepared Ambush**
Of all the military tactics there is, the prepared ambush is one of the most deadly. What I mean by a prepared ambush is one in which the ambushers place themselves in such a way as to be able to all fire on their enemies at once and with surprise. When the enemies move into position, a signal is given and massive firepower is focused upon them, killing as many as possible in as little time as possible.

Ambushes of this type can be used either offensively or defensively. On the offense, they are placed alongside a road, path or trail that the enemy has to come along. When the enemy is in the "kill zone" everyone opens fire. Defensively, the defenders set themselves up so that they are ready to fire upon a point or area where the enemies have to cross to attack and all open fire once they do.

The great advantage of the ambush is surprise. Because the attack happens with surprise, the attackers have a few seconds to kill with abandon, before the training of their enemies can kick in. Those few seconds is when most of the killing happens. Once that initial advantage is lost, most attackers break off and leave, rather than allowing the other side time to organize a counter-attack.

**A Word About the Law**
Before we go any farther in our discussion of home defense, it's important that we take a moment out to make sure we're aware of what the law allows. Some people act like the law will suddenly
disappear after a disaster, so there won't be any need to worry about it. While that may in fact happen, we can't assume that it will. To do so might put us in the position of being the recipient of a necktie party.

Basically, the law recognizes our rights to self-defense. In most states, this is extended to include defense of others and even defense of property. The much argued "castle doctrine" basically states that you don't have to retreat, but can stand your ground and defend your home.

The legal term that's used is "imminent danger," specifically imminent danger of loss of life or of serious injury, as justification for the use of deadly force. In other words, you feel threatened that if you don't kill some intruder, they're going to kill you. Those feelings have to be based upon something tangible, such as them holding a weapon, they've made threats, they are considerably stronger than you or that you know they have a criminal record of violence.

Here's the kicker though; the courts have to determine after the fact that your actions were truly in self-defense. In other words, you have a split second to decide if your life is in danger and the courts can take days or even weeks to decide if you were right. If they decide you weren't, you could face jail time for defending yourself.

I realize that doesn't seem at all fair, but it's the best system they've come up with, so far. So, before pulling the trigger, you need to make sure that it is necessary. On the flip side of that coin, the bad guys might not be so reflective on the law, so they might not hesitate. Obviously if you hesitate too long, you won't need to worry about the court's decision; they never decide against a corpse.

In a post-disaster scenario, where law enforcement officers are overloaded in dealing with the situation and some may have abandoned their posts, I imagine there will be plenty of "holes" in police coverage that the criminal element will be quick to take advantage of. They'll know what they can get away with, as well as how busy the police are. They won't pull any punches, instead taking full advantage of the situation.

However, there will always be an "after" to any post-disaster scenario. That's when the lace panty crowd will start reviewing the actions of law-abiding citizens, trying to find an excuse for calling their act of self-defense something else. So, while the bad guys may act without restrain, you still need to exercise it.

It may seem crazy, but if possible, have a family member film any encounter you have with the bad guys. That will provide you with a defense, showing why you had to kill ten of them, because they stormed your house.

**Preparing Your Home - the Perimeter**

There are those who think that if they can fortify their perimeter enough, they'll stop any enemy. Unfortunately, history has more than disproven that theory, time and time again. There have been countless times when seemingly impenetrable fortifications have been overrun by an enemy. In those cases, the fortifications may have made the victory more expensive for the victors, but they didn't stop them.
In our case, we have an additional complication; that of the law. If you were to fortify the perimeter of your property, say by putting up a ten foot wall, and then killed people who were storming that wall, you might have a hard time in proving that your life was in imminent danger. Until they get on your property or at least shoot onto your property multiple times, you can’t prove that they are attacking you.

So, the ten foot high wall will probably have to be out. But that doesn’t mean that you should ignore your perimeter all together. As far as I’m concerned, the perimeter of my property is like a trip wire. If anyone crosses it under arms that I don’t know to be a friend, I’d have to conclude that they’re an enemy bent on attacking.

With that in mind, I want my perimeter to help me in the coming attack. Since I can’t fortify it to the point where they won’t come in, I have to limit myself to using the perimeter to shape the battle to come. In other words, I’m going to use it to help set up an ambush for any attackers.

Let me tell you a little secret here about how people think. This will make a huge difference in how we look at the perimeter. That is, when faced by an obstacle, the vast majority of people will choose the easiest way to go. When faced with two equally difficult choices, they will chose to go to the right. So, obstacles that may not be able to stop people, can help ensure that they go the way you want them to.

In order to establish an ambush, you have to start out by defining the kill zone. That’s the place where you want the enemy to go, where your entire defensive team can fire on them all at once. For most homes, the best place for the kill zone is the front walkway, between the perimeter and the front door. In that area, they are already on the property, so they are showing hostile intent and they are in a place where they can be shot at from all the windows of the home.

Creating obstacles along the perimeter, while leaving the front walkway open, will help to steer the attackers into this ambush zone. However, for the obstacles to work, they must be consistent and unbroken. If you place several separate obstacles, but leave space open between them, the attackers will use that space.

The easiest way to do this is to build a fence around the front yard, leaving the front gate open. As long as the fence is substantial enough that they can’t just place a hand on it and vault it, it will direct them to the gateway.

As an alternative to a fence, you could grow a hedge. The advantage of a hedge is that it doesn’t look like it is part of your defenses. Allowing it to grow 3-1/2 or 4 feet tall, with the branches intertwined will make it a fairly formable barrier, especially if it has some nice long thorns on it. Of course, you could use cacti for your hedge too, but that may not look right with some architecture.

If you have a sizable piece of property, you can use a ditch, rather than a hedge or fence. A ditch can become a difficult barrier to cross, especially if the sides are steep or it has a lot of weeds growing in it. Plant bushes in it, making a natural looking hedge and you create a formidable barrier.

Once they get through the perimeter, it would seem like smooth sailing from there to the front door. But we don’t want to make their lives easy. That’s why you want your front yard to be strewn with
traps. You can use tripwires or dig holes for them to step in, covering them up with straw. Broken glass can be placed in strategic places, as well as caltrops.

Caltrops are one of my favorite traps. They are metal devices, with four points, made so that one point is always sticking up. Invented during the Middle Ages, they were used to break up cavalry charges. A horse stepping on one became instantly lame. The same would happen to a person stepping on one, unless they had steel shanks in the sole of their boot.

You can make caltrops out of two 16 penny nails. Simply cut the heads off the nails and sharpen the cut off end to a point, making each nail into a piece of wire with two points. Then, bend the nails in the middle, forming a 130 degree angle in them. Two nails put together, with the open angles together, form one caltrop. Weld the two nails together and it's ready to go.

Ideally, you want to spread your caltrops where the bad guys won't expect to encounter them. If they can be hidden by the grass, that's ideal. Like the fence or hedge, place them so that they will steer the bad guys into the area where you want. So, putting them on either side of the walkway would work. Then, if they step too far off the walkway, they'll step into them. Another good place is just inside the fence or hedge, so that if they go over it, they end up in the caltrops. If you have windows that are inviting, put some on the ground under the windows, so that they'll step in them while trying to get the window open.

You need a lot of caltrops for it to be effective. Ideally, you want them just a couple of inches apart. That way, the chances of them stepping into the caltrops and getting hurt is increased. If there is anyplace where they are likely to fall or to dive to the ground when you start shooting, such as behind anything that could provide them with cover, give them a nice soft bed of caltrops to land on.

If you are going to use caltrops as part of your perimeter, start making them now. Fill up a barrel with them, so that when the time comes, you're ready to spread them around. I wouldn't leave them out, unless a disaster happens, as you will be legally liable for any neighbor kids who fall in them and are hurt. The law doesn't look favorably on booby-trapping your property.
**Warning Systems**

The other thing your perimeter needs to do for you is to warn you that you are about to be attacked. Unless your attackers are incredibly stupid, they’re going to try to catch you off guard. To do so, they may scout your home and try to establish your schedule. That would give you the opportunity to see the scouts and know something is coming. But they may just make some assumptions and try to catch you when you will be busy or sleeping.

Your perimeter needs to warn you that your home is about to be attacked. That means putting in some sort of alarm system, so that you know when people cross the line and have breached your perimeter. There are a number of ways you can do this, such as putting in laser alarm systems or just using a trip wire. Whatever system you choose to use, make sure that it is redundant.

The other excellent alarm system you can use is animals. Dogs are especially good at letting you know when someone is coming; but they aren't the only animals that can. One of my favorite is guinea hens; they put up a racket anytime anyone comes around. That may not go over too well with your neighbors, but it will provide you with a good alarm system.

Another option to consider, assuming you have a big enough survival team to do so, is keeping a guard posted 24/7. They would need a location where they could see all around the perimeter of the property, as well as a good pair of binoculars and a powerful flashlight. Better yet, give them some night vision goggles, if you have them. In the case of a pending attack, they could give the warning, giving everyone time to get to their defensive positions.

Let me say something here about false alarms. I’m sure you’ve heard the story about the boy who cried wolf. In a survival situation, you're better off getting false alarms, than you are not getting alarms that you need. I'd rather have my dogs waking me up in the middle of the night, because some neighborhood kid took a shortcut across my yard, than not have them raise the alarm when needed. When it all comes down to it, that jumpy alarm system, whether human, animal or mechanical, will most likely give you the warning you need to keep you alive.

**Hardening Your Home**

I said that you can't fortify the perimeter of your property effectively, but that doesn't mean that you can't fortify the perimeter of your home. The trick is to fortify it, without making it look like that's what you’re doing. While you need to let them onto your property so that you can prove that you are in imminent danger, you don't need to let them into your home.

Proving that one bad guy standing on your front walkway is a danger may be difficult before he shoots, but proving the same for a gang of ten or twenty who show up on your walkway with weapons in their hands is easy. All it takes is one photo. The numbers make all the difference.

Of course, if that ten or twenty manage to breach your door and get into your home, your chances of survival are greatly diminished. So, it's imperative to stop them before that. Part of that is hardening your home so that they can't break in easily, while another is ambushing them in the front yard, so that you have the advantage and can hopefully convince them to leave before getting into your home.
The Front Door

The most common entryway for criminals to use is the front door, so we'll start there. The typical deadbolted entry door can be kicked open with a boot. The weak part of the system is not the door or the deadbolt, but the door frame. Made of 3/4 inch thick pine, this is what the deadbolt goes into. When the door is kicked, the deadbolt breaks through the frame.

There are a number of things that can be done to strengthen an entry door. Taken together, they make it much harder for any criminals to get that door open.

To start with, replace all the screws in the door hinges and striker plates with 3 1/2" long hardened screws. The wood door frame is backed up by dual 2"x 4" studs. These longer screws will go well into those studs, more or less eliminating the ability of breaking out the door frame. At the same time, we're going to put those new screws through some new hardware, which will increase the effectiveness of using them.

You can replace the normal door hinges with security hinges. These have a tab on one leaf, which fits into a corresponding hole on the opposite leaf when the hinge is closed. This acts like a mini-deadbolt on the hinge side of the door. Considering that there are three of them on the same side of the door, that adds a lot of strength.

To strengthen the lock side of the door, a security striker plate should be installed to replace the standard striker plate. The commercially available security striker plates are about a foot long and provide a striker plate for both the door lock and the deadbolt, with mounting screws above, below and between them.

I prefer making my own security striker plates out of 1 1/2" wide by 1/8" thick steel strap. A three foot long piece makes a great striker plate, spreading the force of any kick over a wide area. All it takes to make it is to drill holes for the deadbolt, the door lock and the screws. The ones for the screws should be countersunk so that flat head screws can be used and the heads will be below the level of the plate.

If you are going to make your own security striker plates and you haven't already installed your deadbolt, you can mount the deadbolt higher up on the door, creating a greater space between it and the door lock. That way, if anyone tries to kick the door, the force will be spread across a longer area.

Some criminals try to cut through the door, if they can't kick it open. This is easily solved by putting some metal rods into the edge of the door. The idea is to give them something to run into, that won't be easy to cut. To do so, buy some 3/8" thick steel rod and cut it to lengths that will fit inside the door, without showing up in any of the molding. You'll also need a 3/8" drill bit that's longer than the rods. They are hard to find, but you can buy 12" drill bits.

Drill holes into the edge of the door, above, below and between the door lock and the deadbolt. Be careful to keep the drill straight, so that it doesn't
come out either face of the door. That's the biggest risk with this installation. Once the holes are
drilled, the rods can be driven into the holes and the ends sealed with wood putty. When the putty
dries, sand and paint it, and nobody will be able to tell it's there.

One final thing that can be done to strengthen a front door is to add a door club. This is a device that
attaches to the bottom of the door and attaches it to the floor when you lock up. A socket mounts
into the floor, giving the door club its strength. When the club is not in use, it can be hung on a
bracket on the inside of the door. Even if a criminal breaks the glass out for the door, they won't see
the club or be able to reach it.

Windows
Windows are hard to secure, as they are made of glass, a fragile material. All it takes is a rock or
hammer to get through most of them. Locking the window is a joke, as the window can still be
broken. However, there are two different things that can be done to secure windows. Either one will
work to make it harder for the bad guys to get in that way.

The first, and least intrusive, is to install security window film. This is different than tinted film in that
it is clear, as well as being thicker than window tint. Security films run from 2 mils thick to 12 mils
thick, with the thicker films providing for greater security.

Security window film attaches to the inside of the window pane, much like tinting film. To install,
window cleaner is sprayed on the glass and the film positioned, adhesive side against the window. A
squeegee is used to push out all the air bubbles and liquid and the film is trimmed to fit. After a final
rub down to get all the air bubbles out, the inner protective film is removed. It takes two weeks for
the adhesive to fully adhere to the window glass.

The way that security window film works is much like the safety glass in a car windshield. If that glass
breaks in an accident, the plastic interlayer will hold it in place. Likewise, the security window film
holds the glass shards in place if someone tries to break into a window. That means that to gain
access, they have to break every bit of the glass out of the window; a time consuming task.

The other thing that can be done to secure windows is the addition of burglar bars. These are usually
custom made in a welding shop, although there are some standard sizes available from the larger
home improvement centers. In both cases, the bars are attached to the wall, either inside or outside
the window; covering the glass. Even if they manage to break the glass, they still can't get in,
because the bars are blocking access.

Don't forget to put security window film or burglar bars on the windows inset in your front door and
in the sidelights if you have any. A favorite trick of the bad guys, if they can't kick the door open, is to
break out the glass, reach inside and unlatch the deadbolt and door lock manually. You want to
make sure that even if they break the glass, they won't be able to reach those and open the door.

Obviously, burglar bars are much more secure than security window film. However, the bars are
visible and some people don't like how they look. For those people, the film at least gives them an
option.
**Sliding Glass Patio Doors**

Sliding glass doors are probably the worst nightmare in home security ever invented. There is nothing more inviting to a bad guy than a big piece of glass that he can bust out and walk through. While few criminals do that, simply to avoid attracting attention, in a post-crisis world, they will be much less circumspect.

Conventional wisdom for sliding glass doors assumes that the criminal won't want to break the glass. All it does is prevent the door from being taken off the tracks. That's not enough. As long as that big piece of glass is there, it can be broken, giving access to the house.

The best way of dealing with a sliding glass door is to remove it and replace it with a normal door, which can be secured in the same way we talked about securing the front door. Barring that, the next possibility is to treat it as a big window and secure it that way; installing either security window film or burglar bars. The same welding shops that make burglar bars for the windows can make sliding or swinging doors to go over your sliding glass door.

**Garage Doors**

Garage doors are not as strong as they look. Nevertheless, they are rarely broken through, simply because it is difficult to maneuver through a broken down garage door. However, the bad guys might try to get the door open, thereby gaining entry to the house.

If a garage door has an automatic opener on it, it is extremely easy to break in. Garage door openers always have an emergency disconnect on them, so that you can open the door when there is no power. This disconnect is attached to a cord, with a T handle on the end. All a criminal has to do to get in is to reach in through the space above the garage door and hook that release cord with a piece of wire. A quick pull and the door is unlatched from the automatic opener. Then, they just need to lift the door.

To prevent this, all you have to do is to remove the T handle from the disconnect cord, leaving the cord there. It doesn't take much effort to actuate the disconnect, so you really don't need the handle. Just pull the cord with your hand. But the bad guys won't be able to pull it, because they won't be able to hook it.

For extra security, take a bike padlock (the long kind) and loop it through one of the holes in the track, preferably placing it just above one of the wheels in the track. That will effectively stop the door from moving, even if they manage to get it unlatched.

Side or back doors in the garage should be treated just like the front door, with the same security measures applied.

**The Safe Room**

Some people like the idea of having a safe room in the house. This is a room which has been built out of ballistic materials as a sanctuary. The room gives the family a place to retreat to, so that they can hide from the bad guys in the case of a home invasion.

There's just one problem with a safe room. That is, the whole concept is based upon the assumption that the cavalry is going to come and rescue the family from their dungeon. But in the case of a
disaster, the cavalry, otherwise known as the police department, may not be able to come. You may not even be able to contact them. So, you might end up stuck in the safe room, while the bad guys sit around outside, waiting for you to come out. Even worse, they may set the house afire around you.

I believe in a slightly different type of safe room. That is, a room where the family gathers to make their last stand, before abandoning the home and bugging out. To be this, it has to be somewhere that everyone in the family can get to from their defensive positions; it has to be hard for the bad guys to get to and it has to have an escape route.

Ideally, this room needs to be located in such a way that the bad guys have to come down a hallway to get to it. That puts them in a shooting gallery for you to make one last stand, while you prepare to leave. Then, once you've beaten off that attack, you bug out while they are regrouping.

My safe room is my family room. To get to it, the bad guys have to transit the kitchen, which is 19 feet long. That gives me a great opportunity to take them out, while I hide under cover. Meanwhile, my family can open a hidden door behind a bookcase, which opens into our garage, where our bug out bags are stored. From there, we can escape out the back of the house.

In order to make the safe room more effective, it’s a good idea to use some ballistic materials in the walls and door. That way, you have some cover from their fire, not just concealment. Since ballistic wall panels are extremely expensive, I had to develop my own system.

For this system, I turned to something the military has used for well over 100 years; the sand bag. Actually, I don’t have any bags, just the sand. I’ve turned the lower part of the walls leading into my family room into sandbags.

To do this requires removing the drywall and replacing it with 1/2” plywood. Drywall isn't strong enough to support the weight of the sand. When mounting the plywood, it's important to use long screws to hold it in place. Nails or short screws will eventually pull out. The space between the two sheets of plywood is filled with sand, except where the studs are located.

Finishing plywood to look like drywall is a little tricky. It helps to start by smoothing a thin layer of drywall mud onto the plywood, before taping it, and sanding it smooth. Prime this layer with a good sealing primer. Then you're ready to tape, texture and finish the wall just like it was drywall. The first layer of drywall mud and sealer provide you with a surface that is similar to that of the drywall, making it possible to finish it like it is.

This thin a layer of sand, between two layers of plywood isn't enough to stop high powered rifle bullets, but it will do a good job stopping pistol bullets. You will have a fairly safe place to fight from, as you make that last stand. Don't get so confident in it that you stay to continue the fight. If the bad guys have gotten you to this position, it is truly time to get out. Remember, he who fights and runs away, will live to fight another day. If you escape, you can always come back to take your home back. You can’t do that from the grave.
Your Active Defenses

Everything we've talked about up to this point in this chapter is about passive defenses; things you do to your home to make it harder for the bad guys to get in. It would be nice if that was enough, but chances are that it won't be. At some point in time, you're going to have desperate people trying to get into your home, simply because they think you have food.

Unfortunately, there's really no way that you can provide food for everyone who comes and asks. So, you'd better decide now that you're going to take care of your family, no matter what. That means that you're going to have to be ready to defend home and family, when you are attacked. Actually, I hope that you never have to; but we can't count on that.

That's where active defenses come in; active defenses means taking up arms in the defense of your home. One of the purposes of your passive defenses is to give you time to grab your weapons and "prepare to repel boarders" as they used to say in the days of sailing ships. At the same time, we've talked about designing your passive defenses in such a way that they will lead any attackers into the ambush kill zone, so that you can defend your home the most effectively.

Let's Talk Weapons

Obviously, if you're going to take up arms, you're going to need some arms to take up. Many people have talked about all types of arms which could be used in such a situation. Unless they're talking about firearms, they're probably not thinking things through all the way. You attackers will probably have firearms, so to respond to them with anything less would be suicidal.

I don't care how good a martial arts expert you are, taking on a man with a gun, using only your martial arts moves, probably isn't going to work out all that well for you. They can shoot you, long before you can get within striking range of them.

That's not to say that you want to throw out all your training and alternate weapons. You might actually have a time when they are useful. However, don't depend upon them to the exclusion of firearms. Guns are the great equalizer and you want to meet guns with guns... preferably with bigger, more powerful guns and superior training in their use.

The question then becomes, what sorts of guns should you buy? There are a lot of opinions about that, with one person advocating certain guns while another advocates something else. I'm going to take my best shot at giving you the best advice available, while giving you the reasoning behind avoiding some of the other options.

Let's start out with fully-automatic weapons, what are known as "assault rifles." By definition, an assault rifle is a rifle that has the capability of firing on full auto. This is different than what the media is calling an assault rifle, as they are including anything that even looks remotely military in the category of assault rifles. By doing so, they are demonstrating their ignorance.

The problem with full automatic fire is that you can't control the weapon. Firearms all have recoil and when you are in full automatic fire, the recoil causes the shots to climb. In other words, after the first shot, you're not shooting at the target. That's dangerous. If your bullet doesn't go where you
want, there's a good chance that it will go where you don't want. You could very easily end up killing
the old lady that lives across the street or the neighbor's child playing in their yard.

For this reason, I'm not in favor of fully automatic firearms for home defense. In the military they
have an application, as fully automatic fire is used on the battlefield for suppressive fire. It can also
be used to rake across an area where enemies are thought to be hidden. But that's a combat zone,
not a home.

That leaves us with three categories of firearms to consider: pistols, rifles and shotguns.

Pistols or handguns are the easiest type of gun to use in a home, as their short length makes
maneuvering easy. However, as we already discussed, you want to try to engage the bad guys before
they get into your home. At the greater distance, unless you're a really good pistol shot, you're likely
to miss them.

Nevertheless, I firmly believe that every member of your family who is old enough to shoot or every
member of your survival team should carry a pistol at all times. As one firearms instructor put it,
"You carry a pistol so that you have something to shoot, while you're making your way to your long
gun."

Pistols can be broken down into two general categories; revolvers and semi-automatic (erroneously
called automatic by the media). Many people like revolvers for their simplicity, but the revolver has
one problem, it is limited in the number of rounds it can carry. Reloading takes time, during which
you are essentially unarmed. For this reason, I prefer a semi-automatic pistol, where you can change
out a magazine and keep shooting.

Pistol caliber is another highly debated issue. Some prefer larger calibers for their greater power,
while others prefer smaller calibers, citing the penetration power of the 9mm. Basically, you should
carry the largest caliber pistol that you are comfortable shooting. That's key. If you aren't
comfortable shooting it because it beats up your hand or it's too loud, you're not going to use it
correctly.

1 Glock 17, 9mm with 17 round magazine. It has Crimson Trace laser sight and tactical light mounted to it; both
of which have pressure sensitive switches that allow them to turn on when the gun is drawn. The pistol also
has tritium sights for use in low light situations, so that the tactical light does not need to be used.
This is especially important for women. I carry a .45 caliber pistol as my personal defense weapon, but my wife can't shoot it. Her hands aren't strong enough to allow her to rack the slide. So, I bought her a .380 caliber Sig Sauer, which has the reputation of being the easiest semi-automatic pistol there is to rack the slide. While she doesn't have as much firepower with her gun, she has a gun that she's comfortable shooting.

When we talk about rifles, we're either talking about hunting rifles or sporting rifles that are modeled after military rifles. Either one will work for shooting at bad guys in your front yard. But if they breach your home's exterior, the military rifles are shorter and easier to use indoors.

The biggest problem with most rifles is that they are actually designed for use at a longer range than what you're going to be shooting. That's okay, as it will still work fine at close ranges. But you might want to check out how well your scope works at short range. If you don't have an adjustable magnification on the scope, you might want to make sure that your scope mounts allow you to see the iron sights on your rifle. Of course, if you don't have a scope, this isn't an issue.

The other big difference between hunting rifles and military-style sporting rifles is the magazine capacity. A lot has been said about "high capacity" magazines in the press and by liberal politicians. But in fact, what they are calling high capacity is normal capacity. It's just that it's higher than what they think people should be allowed to have. An AR-15 semi-automatic rifle will have a 30 round magazine, while a hunting rifle will usually have 10 or less.

The other type of long gun to consider is a shotgun. Here again, length is an issue for maneuvering indoors. However, if you buy a tactical shotgun, or one of the newer bullpup designs, they are considerably shorter.

Many experts say that the shotgun is the ideal home defense weapon. One of the big reasons for this is its flexibility. There are more types of ammunition made for the 12 gauge shotgun, than there are for any other firearm you can buy. Not only can you buy a number of different shot sizes, but

---

2 Custom built AR-15 sporting rifle. Has a short quad rail mounted on it, with a front vertical rail grip. The grip has a tactical light and laser sight built into it, both on momentary switches. A piston is used instead of gas impingement for cycling the action and loading another round. ATI adjustable stock and grip with Scorpion recoil system. A Bushnell 1 - 4 power scope is mounted on it as well.
also slugs, flares, beanbags (less than lethal), rubber slugs (also less than lethal) and flechette rounds (extremely lethal).

Typically, a tactical shotgun is loaded with alternating 00 Buckshot and Slugs. This provides a round that has a bit of dispersion, followed by one that is solid for maximum knockdown power. While the dispersion of the shot inside a home won't be enough to matter, shooting outside the home will provide some dispersion. For longer shots, out to 100 yards, the slugs work well. Slugs are also useful for shooting cars to disable the engine.

Shotguns are normally considered "point and shoot" weapons, as for hunting you don't really aim them, just point them at the bird. Most experts agree that when used for home defense or tactical situations, they should be used the same. I disagree, for the same reason I disagree with using fully automatic rifles; you don't know who you'll hit, if you don't aim carefully.

I have a red dot sight mounted on my personal shotgun. This allows me to fire it with some degree of accuracy. I say "some degree" because the ballistics of a shotgun aren't as good as they are for a rifle. The lack of rifling to put a spin on the pellets coming out of the shotgun reduce its accuracy. Nevertheless, a shotgun with a red dot sight is much more accurate than one with just a bead to sight with.

Okay, so how should you arm your team? First of all, I'd recommend that everyone have a pistol as a sidearm. This should be on their body at all times, from the time they wake up in the morning, to the time they go to bed at night. Since we aren't in a survival mode right now, you might want to consider getting a concealed weapons license, so that you can start carrying it.

In addition, I would recommend that every team member be armed with a long gun. These should vary, with a good mix of shotguns and rifles. Keep in mind the limitations of how far you are shooting and buy accordingly. I seriously doubt you're going to have many opportunities to use a sniper rifle and if you did, you would have a hard time proving imminent danger, unless you are shooting at a sniper that's shooting at you.

3 Mossburg 500, 12 Gauge shotgun. The forestock has been replaced with a triple rail that has a tactical light on one side and an angled foregrip mounted below it. The light is on a pressure switch for momentary use. ATI adjustable folding stock and grip have been installed in lieu of the original. A 'red dot' sight is mounted on a rail above the action.
Firearms Training

Hollywood has done a great job of showing how easy guns are to use. After all, they've got lots of actors who pick up a gun for the first time, hold it the wrong way, don't even use the sights and still manage to hit a target that's out of range. Man, I wish I was that good.

In reality, shooting accurately is much harder than it looks. The basic fundamentals of shooting aren't all that hard to learn, but learning how to apply them regularly and consistently, without having to think about it, takes a lot of time on the shooting range, practicing. Even so, learning how to use firearms accurately is still a lot easier than just about any other weapon you can think of.

If you're going to use guns to defend your home, you're going to have to learn how to use them well. It's best to learn on a pistol, as they are harder to shoot. The lessons you learn on a pistol will more easily translate to a rifle or shotgun, than trying to start with a long gun and then go to a pistol. So, to start, you need to learn how to shoot. Get a good book on shooting fundamentals or take a class at your local range. That will get you started. Then, once you learn that, make it a regular habit to go to the shooting range and practice.

You don't want to do a lot of shooting each time you go to the range. If you're shooting a .22 caliber pistol, you can shoot up about 100 rounds in a session. If you're shooting a larger caliber, limit yourself to 50 rounds. That way, your hands won't get too tired and throw off your shooting.

Concentrate on improving the size of your group. Group size is determined by measuring the centers of the two holes in the target that are the farthest apart. You want to bring this size down as much as possible. A four inch group is fairly good for moving on to the next stage of your training, but a one inch group is better.
This target, one of mine, shows a 7/8" group. I don't always get that good a group, so it always brings a smile to my face when I do. This was shot with the Glock pistol a couple of pages back.

Once you get to the point where you have a fairly good group size, it's time to start some tactical shooting. Many shooting ranges offer tactical shooting events one night per week. In them, you are faced with a scenario that you have to work your way through, alone, as if you are in a true life-fire situation. The event is shot against the clock, which adds to the pressure, making it more realistic. Some of the elements you will find incorporated in a tactical shooting scenario include:

- Shooting at multiple targets - Bad guys, like coyotes, run in packs
- Shooting at multiple ranges - No, the bad guys aren't all going to line up at the distance you're used to shooting
- Shooting at moving targets - Bad guys may not be all that smart, but they're smart enough to try and get out of your line of fire
- Shooting while moving - Assuming you're at least as smart as the bad guys, you shouldn't stand there and make a good target out of yourself either
- Shooting from cover - It's nice to have something to hide behind, which will stop the bad guy's bullets
- Shooting in low light - You can count on the bad guys showing up at the wrong time. One of their favorites is when you can't see them well. Unfortunately, they won't take a rain check

Shooting in these circumstances is vastly different than shooting at round targets at a fixed range. No matter how good a shot you are, I can pretty much guarantee that you will do horribly the first time out. I did, and that target with the 7/8" group was shot with the same gun that I used at the tactical shoot.

The great thing about tactical shooting events like this is that they train you how to do what you have to do, when you have to do it for real. After a few months of regular tactical shooting, you'll find that you do better, even when they through things at you like shooting while moving.

**Defending Your Home**

Now that you have prepared your passive defenses, bought some guns and learned how to use them, you're ready to consider how you're going to defend your home. I've already hinted at some of this, but I want to bring it together and make sure you know how to develop your defensive plan.

The first thing you have to look at is the assets you have at your disposal. In other words, how many shooters do you have available? Hopefully, you're not planning on doing a Rambo and taking them all on yourself. If you only have one or two people attacking your home, you can probably manage that. But if you've got 10 or 20, there's no way you can do it, no matter how good you are.

I understand your desire to protect your family and keep them from harm, but getting yourself shot, trying to take them all on yourself isn't going to protect them. It's probably only going to ensure that they get raped and killed as well. You need enough shooters on your team, to ensure that you can either kill or drive off the attackers.

This is why a survival team is important. If you can team up with neighbors or friends and work together, your chances of survival will be much greater. While it may seem crowded, pick the most
defensible house in your team and meet there. By living together you can share survival tasks, such as defense.

You want to spread out your shooters, putting them in separate firing positions. Those will mostly be the windows of your home. That spreads out the shooters, providing a greater chance of hitting the bad guys, while at the same time making the job of the bad guys to hit your team members even harder.

If your home is made of brick, it will stop pretty much all handgun rounds, with the exception of some magnum rounds. However, it will not stop rifle rounds, other than .22 caliber long rifle. So, you may need to fortify your defensive positions or use body armor.

To fortify your firing positions, you can turn to an age-old army device, called the sandbag. The floors of an average home will support a three foot high, one foot thick sandbag wall, without any problem. That's enough to stop pretty much all bullets fired from rifles, with the exception of a couple of the stronger sniper rifle rounds.

One person (probably you), needs to confront the attackers as they approach the home, asking about their intentions and warning them to leave. That may not have any effect, but it will put it on record what they are approaching the home for. Once they have been put on notice, you can open fire, as long as they are clearly displaying hostile intent.

We've talked about using an ambush and having it take on your front walkway, between the sidewalk and your front door. That's the best possible scenario for you. The key thing is, they have to show hostile intent first. That will probably happen by someone in the group taking a shot at the house. With a sizeable group of aggressors, you can easily argue that they were an imminent threat, if they show hostile intent.

Once they do, unleash on them with everything you've got. One of the things that makes an ambush work so well is massed firepower raining down on the victims, quickly. It not only increases the chances of getting some kills, but adds to the psychological impact of the event. Every one of them is going to feel very alone, as if they are the only one you are shooting at.

Ideally, the majority of the group will lose courage and run away. That's as effective for your purposes as having to kill them. It also lowers the legal complications. The less victims, the less likelihood of being charged with murder.

The one person you most want to seek out and target is the group's leader (or leaders). They will usually be pretty obvious, as they will do the talking and they will be giving commands to others. Those commands may be verbal, but they might also be hand signals.

If you can take out the leader, then there's a good chance that you can demoralize the whole group, causing them to run away. If you have a sniper, that's their principle job. If you don't have a sniper, than take that as your principal job. Other than seeking out leaders and eliminating them, concentrate on those that seem to be the biggest threat.

Don't forget about your blind side. A frontal attack could be a diversion to get your whole team fighting that attack. While your attention is focused out the front of your house, they might send a
man over your back fence, with the mission of getting into your house and killing you. Always post a rear guard.
Stockpiling - What Else do You Need

We've already talked about stockpiling food and water, but that's not going to be enough, there are some other things you should consider stockpiling as well. If the supply system is so bad that you can't get food and water, you've got to figure that you aren't going to be able to get anything else you need either. So, you'll have to be able to survive on what you have stored up in your home.

There's actually quite a bit that you need; some of which is obvious and some of which is not so obvious. In addition, there might be some things that you think you need, but don't really. It's important to remember that your main business will be survival, not whatever you do normally. In fact, your regular job may be closed down for the duration of the crisis, leaving you free to deal with the necessities of survival.

Of course, it all depends upon the actual disaster that you end up facing. Not all disasters will require the same equipment and supplies. A lot will depend upon what parts of the infrastructure will still be in operation. Since we don't know that ahead of time, we have to plan as if none of it will be.

This list isn't 100% complete, simply because every person's situation is different. You will need to add to it as is appropriate for your personal needs. Keep in mind that as family members pass through different stages of their lives, their needs will change. So, you'll want to plan ahead a bit, buying things that they may not need for a year or two and having them in your stockpile.

- **Fuel** - You're going to need fuel to burn for heating your home, cooking, your vehicle and even for cutting the grass. While it will be impossible to stockpile enough fuel, you should do what you can. It's especially important to stockpile fuel for eating and cooking, as you will need those to survive.
- **Fire starters** - You will probably be using fire to cook and heat your home. Make sure you have an adequate supply of fire starters, both primary systems and some alternate ones you can use.
- **Lighting** - Flashlights, candles and oil-burning lamps are all excellent options for lighting your home when the power is out. One nice thing about oil-burning lamps is that you can burn just about any flammable liquid in them, it doesn't just have to be the fuel designed for the lamps.
- **Batteries** - Modern society is addicted to electricity. Even if the power is out, you'll still want to use your portable electronics. Stock a goodly supply of batteries, especially AA and AAA. Now, the manufacturers of alkaline batteries is saying that these batteries will last for as much as ten years. Don't forget lithium button batteries for those things that need them.
- **Personal hygiene** - Keeping clean is an important part of maintaining your health, specifically in avoiding infections. Don't forget plenty of toilet paper, as well as feminine hygiene products.
- **Cleaning supplies** - Keeping yourself clean is easier if you have the capability of keeping your home clean as well. It will also help to keep down bugs, rodents and cockroaches.
- **Medicines** - If you have any family members who regularly use prescription medicines, you want to have a goodly supply of them on hand. This can be difficult because doctors may not want to write prescriptions for a year or two's worth of the medications. If you happen to
travel close to Mexico you can solve this problem by buying the medicine in a Mexican pharmacy.

- **Heirloom seeds** - Your best shot at sustainability if the crisis lasts beyond your food stocks is to grow your own. Heirloom seeds are the old varieties, which are open pollinated. Unlike hybrids and GMOs, seeds produced by plants grown from heirloom seeds will grow the next generation of plants, the same as the generation they were taken from.

- **Gardening equipment and supplies** - Gardening requires more than just dirt and seeds. You’ll need a fair amount of equipment, as well as fertilizer and some other supplies. Actually, I’d recommend beginning your garden before the crisis hits, as it takes at least a year to get your soil in shape for a good garden. This will also give you an opportunity to learn how to garden, so that you can get good yields.

- **Hand tools** - Most of us are used to using our power tools for everything. But if there is no electrical power, those tools aren't going to do a whole lot of good. Make sure you have at least the basic hand tools, as well as an axe, a shovel and a bow saw.

- **Home repair materials** - Many disasters can cause damage to homes. A few basic supplies, like plywood, 2”x 4” studs and tarps, along with a good selection of hardware, will help you to make any emergency repairs needed.

- **Clothing** - Most of the clothing that we use on a day-to-day basis isn’t rugged enough to hold up in a survival situation. You’ll need some strong, outdoors type clothing that you can work in. Your children will also need clothing, as they will be growing out of it. Have some clothes on hand for them that are a size or two large, so that you have something for them to wear as they grow.

- **Baby needs** - If you have a baby in the household or if you are pregnant, you want to make sure that you have enough baby supplies to last. I won’t get into what those are, as that could be a whole list in and of itself. But you might want to consider cloth diapers, rather than disposables.

- **Barter goods** - Undoubtedly there will be things that you forget to stockpile; it happens to all of us. The easy solution is to stock some barter goods, so that you can trade for those things you need. Besides stocking extra food and the other survival supplies I’ve mentioned, the best barter goods are alcohol and cigarettes.

Please note that I’ve intentionally skipped over items that are talked about elsewhere in this book. There is no reason to repeat what I’ve already told you. So, before you run out with this list, thinking it is complete, check through the rest of the book to see what else you need.