

HOW TO
**HIDE YOUR
GUNS**



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WHY GUNS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

It's easy to make fun of disaster movies, but events like Hurricane Katrina's devastation of New Orleans are proof that as a culture, we really are only three hot meals away from anarchy.

We can't help the fact that sometimes, systems break. Tornadoes take out power plants, earthquakes level buildings, floods erase entire city blocks. When that happens,

survival instincts kick in. People collect food, water, medicine, and whatever else they think they'll need to make it through the disaster.

It sounds so civilized when described that way. In reality, it means looting. Most people don't stock more than 4 days of food at home. Water comes from a tap. Medicines are things we buy as-needed at Walgreens. When that security is taken away, people don't neatly line up outside a shop and wait for the manager to fill out a disaster insurance claim while his employees fairly distribute the goods within. The first wave of people show



up with money and buy everything they can fit in their cars. The next wave shows up with weapons and takes whatever is left.

If emergency supplies aren't brought in from an outside source, once well stocked stores are looted, people will turn to preying on their neighbors. When an armed group of hungry thugs turns up at your door, you want to be able to greet them with a gun. Preferably, you want everyone in your family to greet them with guns.

In an emergency situation, having a gun on hand isn't just self defense. Guns can diffuse a potentially violent situation. Imagine your home town has suffered a devastating natural disaster. You're well prepared and holed up. Desperate people, a little crazy from both hunger and fear, break into your home. If you're defending yourself with a mix of baseball bats, a rock in a sock, and broken glass bottles, someone is going to get hurt—probably both you and them. On the other hand, if someone breaks in and you level a gun at them, they stop. If all goes well, you can now talk them into leaving. If it goes badly, you can shoot them from a distance without giving them a chance to injure you. People who would cheerfully club you over the head with a broken pipe will back away from a gun. Being armed protects both you and your potential attacker.

HIDING AND STORING YOUR WEAPONS AT HOME



A gun safe is a wonderful thing for houses with children. However, if a burglar breaks into your house at 2 in the morning, you won't have time to scramble through the dark, feed it the combination, then find and load your gun in the dark. For self defense purposes, you want your weapons where you can access them at any time.

A gun safe is incredibly convenient. It's also a good place to store your more valuable guns, any collector items, or weapons your family hasn't trained with yet. That last part is the most important. Before you strategically hide your guns in your home, you need to make sure every single person living there knows where to find them and how to use them. If you don't take that precaution, you might as well be arming potential attackers. A gun

in the hand of someone who doesn't know how to use it is a gift to the person they're defending themselves from. Before you start storing your guns outside a gun safe, take everyone in your household to a firing range and make sure they know how to use, load, clean, empty, and safely store any weapon you'll have secreted about.

Once everyone in your household is trained up, you want to hide your guns where they're easily accessible to you but not obvious to strangers.

COUCHES, LOVESEATS, AND RECLINERS

Like most people, your furniture is probably a mix of new and old pieces. You might have a comfy old chair your parents gave you when you moved into your



first apartment alongside a brand new couch you bought last year. If you're going to store guns in your furniture, it's best to pick up some cheap pieces at a garage sale. You can easily dress up old furniture with a new slip cover or fresh coat of paint so it doesn't look out of place in your living room.

The point of buying some cheap garage sale

furniture is you can easily, affordably modify it to hold your guns. Your family probably won't approve of you ripping up the good stuff, so buy cheap and help with redecoration.

Couches and loveseats are the easiest to modify. Flip your newly acquired garage sale couch upside down. Use a boxcutter or strong knife to rip away any protective cloth that keeps furniture customers from being able to see the innards of their seating. You should now be looking at a few cheap wooden beams near the bottom and possibly some loose springs. Use wire cutters to trim away any loose springs that have fallen through over the years. You don't want anyone to cut their hand reaching for a gun.

If you have any woodworking tools at home, the best thing to do is create a small, light-weight rectangular box with the open end facing the front of the couch. Make it just wide enough to slide in your gun of choice and some ammunition. Position it as close to the front of the couch as possible and nail it to the support beams. The goal is for you to be able to reach under the couch's protective dust flap and pull the gun right out.

A sturdy couch beam with a moderately well crafted box can easily support larger weapons.

If you don't have any woodworking tools, you can achieve a similar effect by weaving a net

out of duct tape. Create long strips with the silver side out. Weave them together as though you're making an Easter Basket. Tape the top edges of the net to the front most support beam of your couch. Put your gun and ammo in the duct tape net, then use a single piece of duct tape to secure the front closed. You want to be able to rip it open at a moment's notice. The duct tape net is best for handguns.

Another option for couches, loveseats, and comfy chairs is hiding a gun compartment in a cushion. Make an incision along the back of your cushion and sew in a Velcro closure. It'll look like you picked this cushion because the exterior was easy to clean. Cut a hole in the interior of the cushion just large enough for your gun. Line the hole with duct tape. This will give it some structural support and help mask the cushion's contents. You don't want to lean on the cushion and have someone see the outline of the gun. The duct tape lining also makes it easier for you to reach right in and grab it without any worry about bits of padding or fiber getting caught in your hand or the trigger. Cushions are good places to hide small handguns.

Don't try to hide your gun in your couch's seat. It's not only uncomfortable to have a gun wedged into your thigh while you're trying to watch a game, it's also incredibly awkward to try and free the gun if you're caught by surprise.

END TABLES AND NIGHT STANDS

If you don't currently have an end table sitting next to your couch or comfy chair, that's another good place to strategically hide a gun. Find one with a relatively deep drawer. It's surprisingly easy to create a fake drawer you can use to hide a gun. Measure the interior of your drawer. Have your local hardware store cut a piece of plywood to fit—give yourself about 1/16 inch of leeway on the measurements so it'll slide down. Paint and finish the wood so it matches the bottom of your actual drawer. Pick up some dowel rods, spools, or whatever spacers you like best. Lay your gun flat. The spacers need to be a fraction wider than the thickest point in your gun. Now get some sturdy ribbon and make a loop about twice the width of your forefinger. Staple a loop like that on all four sides of your plywood. You'll need this in order to pull the wood up quickly and free your gun.



Put the gun and ammunition in the base of your drawer. Line the edges with your spacers. Carefully slide your fake plywood bottom into place, taking care to leave the finger loops on the outside. Make a few bows and decorative things out of the remaining spool of ribbon and throw them into the drawer for a distraction. While you're at it, throw in the whole spool. Fill the drawer

with useless, lightweight clutter—envelopes, expired coupons, books of stamps—anything that will disguise the actual depth of the drawer without weighing it down. You now have a sturdy surface to put your drink on and a secure place to hide a gun, all in one.

HOLLOWED OUT BOOKS

You don't need any special tools for this. Simply go to a thrift store and pick a particularly thick book. Use a box cutter to hollow out the middle of the pages. Tuck your gun inside and slide it on a shelf next to a handful of other similarly sized books. Don't go for an ancient, leatherbound medical textbook or some other stately looking book. Your best, most convincing disguise is an old Stephen King hardback that still has the dust jacket, or some other bestseller as thick as a brick.

This works equally well in the kitchen. There, people are expected to have some ancient, outdated cookbooks. Get an old, cheap edition of *The Joy of Cooking* or something equally dense, hollow it out, and sandwich it between a few newer cookbooks. This is better than trying to hide a gun in the flour or tucked in amongst the pots and pans because you won't have to waste any time searching for it or fumbling through objects you actually use every day.



TOILETS AND SINKS

Moving out of the living room, toilets make a good place to hide your guns. You can always seal a gun in waterproof plastic and leave it in the toilet tank.



It's a classic move for good reason. If you want to be stealthier, your bathroom sink provides perfect coverage.

Most bathroom sinks have a decorative fake drawer in the front. There might be functional drawers to the sides. They slide to the left and the right of the actual plumbing. You can only put a very shallow drawer directly in front of the sink bowl itself, so most manufacturers don't bother.

That leaves just enough room to hide a gun between the sink and the fake decorative drawer. It's extra protected by the combination of darkness and awkward accessibility. If you're a handyman, you can have plywood cut to make a floating platform that conforms to the shape of the sink and the front of the cabinet. Suspend it from the underside of the sink. Make sure the plywood is cut in such a way that it lies flush with the drawers on either side. You should only be able to access the gun if you're lying on the floor with the sink cabinet doors open and the drawers pulled all the way out. Reach behind the extended drawers to access the platform you just created.

If you want something with faster access or you don't have the right tools at home, you can reuse the duct tape net trick. In this case, the goal is to make it look like you've done a horrible job fixing your own plumbing. Add duct tape to your pipes. Use it to look like you reinforced some of the wood structure of your cabinet. But most of all, use it to create a nice little net between the front of the fake drawer and the body of the sink. You shouldn't need to open the drawers to access the contents of your net. As long as you know exactly where it's located, you should be able to reach under the sink and pull your gun right out.

If your household includes ladies of a certain age, tampon boxes are a great place to hide small handguns. People have a visceral dislike of everything involving menstruation, so an open box of tampons with a few sticking out of the top isn't going to be anyone's first choice of places to search. Plus, while many women enjoy spending an afternoon at the gun range, stereotypes of women as passive and afraid of firearms can work to their advantage. In addition to a tampon box, if the women in your family enjoy lots of sample sized soaps, bath bombs, and other stereotypically girly things, try hiding a gun at the bottom of their bath basket. Just make sure to keep restocking the basket with more sample sized bottles of scented bodywashes to keep the gun safely hidden.

YOUR BED

In addition to the living room and bathroom, the bedroom is an excellent place to hide guns. You can use the same false drawer trick on your nightstand. For larger guns, your bed offers plenty of great hiding spaces.

If your bed rests on a frame with some elevation off the floor, you can easily build a short ledge extending inwards from the bedframe. If you have some handyman skills and want to thoroughly disguise your hiding place, build a ledge on both sides of your bed, extending inwards about eight inches, and close it off with a series of three latched doors. The goal here is to make it look like your gun ledge is actually another structural support holding up the bed. You want an interior door on your shelf so anyone sliding under the bed won't see your guns. You want to split it in to three doors so if you're on the floor, you can easily open the secret drawer from any angle. You never want to be too far from a secret latch that can open the door.

If you don't have access to tools, you can bundle larger guns inside neatly folded blankets and store those under the bed. It'll look like you're prepared for a cold night, not an unexpected attack.

The headboard of your bed is another great hiding place. If you have the know-how to build an integrated drawer under your bed, you can create something very similar along

the sides of your headboard. In this case, it should go horizontally on the inner part of the outermost edge of the bed. Build your drawer to match the length of your guns and design a door that will open inwards. Keep the look up for the entire length of the headboard. You can build extra drawers underneath the one holding your gun and use those to store cash, gold, or other valuables. Instead of a simple pressure latch or hook and eye, the valuables drawers should be kept closed with a key.

If your family won't let you take your bed apart for the sake of a construction project, you can always install a simple floating bookshelf to the back. Anchor one shelf about a foot down. It should be able to bear the weight of your guns. Hide it with a floating shelf near the top of the headboard. Instead of anchoring the second shelf, simply rest it on the metal supports. That way, if you need your guns, all you have to do is throw the movable shelf out of the way in an instant and reach straight down. You can install this type of simple shelving using nothing but a screwdriver and patience.

YOUR BASEMENT

If your house has a basement or utility room with exposed plumbing (usually the same room where you'll find your hot water heater) you can also easily hide guns by setting up a series of fake pipes. Some people

pick a real pipe and install a Y extension, then hide their guns in it. The problem with that is if you have to break the pipe open in order to get to your guns, you risk flooding your basement. Instead, you're far better off setting up a fake pipe line. Simply anchor some inexpensive plastic pipes to your ceiling next to where real pipes emerge. A pipe wide enough to fit a fully assembled handgun might look suspiciously large next to your regular plumbing, so contemplate the possibility of disassembling a gun and storing it inside. Alternately, save fake pipes for storing your smallest guns or for creating an ammunition cache.

HIDING AND STORING YOUR WEAPONS IN YOUR CAR



Safety doesn't stop when you leave the house. It's important to stay protected while you're in your vehicle.

AIRBAG

If you end up in a wreck, your passenger may not thank you for resorting to this tactic. However, if you end up in a dangerous situation, you'll be glad you took the precaution. Carefully pry the protective cover off your airbag. Removing it can be tricky, so wear a painters mask, goggles, and gloves. You're likely to get the lubricating powder everywhere as you attempt to cut the airbag free. Alternately, you can find a cash-only detailing operation and ask them to remove the airbag while they're cleaning your car.

Regardless of how you remove it, you now have what amounts to a good sized secret glove compartment on the passenger side of your car. This is a great place to store both a gun and extra ammo. To keep it from getting too noisy, pad the interior of the compartment with either bubble wrap or some sort of cloth.

SEAT CUSHION

There's nothing wrong with storing your gun under the seat, but you're a lot safer storing it inside your seat. Unlike couches, car seats are incredibly thick. After all, they're designed to do a lot of shock absorption when driving. You can cut a slit across the entire width of the front of your seat. Get some matching leather or fabric and some weak Velcro. Sewing those in place will keep the slit closed and make it look like a decorative element.

Use a boxcutter or strong knife to cut a hole about a foot into the seat cushion. These

cushions are typically very tough, so be prepared to sweat. Once you've created your hole, hollow out about an inch. You don't want to hollow the whole width of your gun. It should stay nestled securely inside. To prevent it from getting stuck when you pull it out, line the hole with duct tape in a color that best matches your seat's exterior. That way if the Velcro is open for some reason, the hole is less obvious. Slide your gun into place, Velcro the hole closed, and drive in peace.

JUNK FOOD BAG

There's nothing wrong with hiding a gun in a simple, unexpected place like a bag of potato chips or some fast food. Add a few packing peanuts to give the bag some depth. You don't want it to look like a bag neatly crumpled around a gun. Instead, you want it to look like leftovers you haven't gotten around to throwing away yet. If your seats have storage netting on the back, just tuck it in the passenger side for easy access.

HIDING YOUR GUNS OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSE



Whether you have a cabin somewhere, a trusty garage, or a good friend who's living room is your home away from home, there are good reasons to store your guns outside your house.

BROKEN FRIDGE

Every garage deserves two refrigerators—one sturdy powerhouse for beer and bulk foods and another old, broken down hunk full of storage cubbies. The old broken down fridge can be more useful to you than a safe. After all, people will steal a safe to open later but they won't haul a big, awkward, busted fridge off in the hopes there are treasures inside.

Just like with the under-sink “repairs,” duct tape is your friend. Remove the drawers, carefully bust a hole in the bottom, and suddenly you have a secure, hidden drawer in a place no one will ever think to look.

You can hide guns, ammunition, money, or other valuables there. Cover the hole with duct tape, slide the old drawer back in place, and no one is the wiser. If your entire fridge looks like it's made of duct tape, people might get suspicious, but you can use the same tactic to slide things into the side walls or the back of the fridge. If anyone asks, you just haven't gotten around to getting rid of it.

BURIED COFFEE CAN

These days, there are a ton of inexpensive garden objects you can use to mark the location of a buried coffee can. Put your guns,

ammunition, perhaps some cash or valuables, and a desiccant into the can. Desiccant just means “water absorbing.” It keeps things from getting moldy. You'll find a tiny packet of desiccant at the bottom of every pair of shoes you buy, buried in new purses, and tucked away in nearly anything that might spend time in a hot, humid warehouse before being shipped to a store. You don't want your gun getting damp while it's in storage.

Bury your gun can in relatively shallow ground. The best idea is to put it a foot underground and top it with an easily identifiable statue that just happens to be holding something you can use as a trowel to dig it up. You'll look at your neighbors a different way the next time you see a thigh-high statue in their yard of an angel holding a spear.

GUN STORAGE YOU CAN BUY

If you prefer to hide things in plain sight without worrying about anyone commenting on your craftwork skills, there are a number of very nice, subtle items you can purchase.

GUN CLOCK

A gun clock is a nice, thick, sturdy looking clock with a hidden safe inside. They're designed to look like a historic clock full of gears and complicated internal mechanisms. Instead,



the actual functional part of the clock is often no more than an inch thick, leaving the interior free for storage purposes. You can buy some with hidden locks or some that swing free easily, depending on your preference. Best of all, most of these clocks are designed to be genuine artwork for your home. A nice gun clock can easily be the most beautiful object in your living room.

GUN LAMPS

Gun lamps are a little harder to find. Most people assume they're a toy gun decorated to look like the base of a lamp. That's amusing for about ten minutes. A real gun lamp is a lamp with a wide, thick base which can be easily snapped open or unscrewed so you can store a gun inside. These lamps are often pretty sturdy. Don't try to smash it over someone's head in order to open it. You'll probably crack their skull without doing any real damage to the lamp itself.

PICTURE FRAMES

You have two options with hiding a gun behind some art. The expensive option is to buy a narrow safe and have it hidden in your wall, so when you swing the photo frame out your gun is revealed. The cheaper option is to once more visit a garage sale, thrift store, or anywhere cheap frames are sold and buy the thickest one you can get your hands on. Add some soft felt or

foam spacers to the back. Allegedly, these are to protect the wall, but really, they're to give you both leverage and depth. Get the thinnest possible piece of plastic for the front of the picture frame and put in a cheap print of something you don't mind looking at. Back it with cardboard. This is all to create the illusion of caring for your art while really creating plenty of space. Most frames slope outwards from an angle. You want a flat surface to rest your gun on so it doesn't slip out. Pick the bottom part of your frame. Glue or nail a flat, strong piece of particle board to the innermost part of the frame, so it sticks straight back while the decorate part continues to slope downwards. You now have a picture you don't mind breaking which you can knock off your wall in a heartbeat in order to get to your hidden gun.

SAFES

If you're not concerned with instant access, there are a variety of excellent safes on the market at any budget. You can get anything from a classic spinning combination lock to a biometric lock programmed for your fingerprints or retina. It all depends on your budget. These can be installed into your walls, hidden inside a piece of furniture (such as an end table or night stand) or buried in your floor, with a trap door hidden under your couch or favorite chair.

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