

8 EVERYDAY CARRY TIPS & TECHNIQUES

for the Responsibly
Armed American





Call it a pocket dump, call it your everyday carry, call it your “#EDC” ... call it what you will, but posting pictures on social media of all the bits and pieces of gear you have on you at any given moment is popular right now. Browsing through posts of people’s gear, I’m always on the lookout for ideas for my pockets. Sometimes, I’ll come across a piece of gear that I really like. Sometimes, I’ll come across something that makes me really wonder about the thought process behind what a person chooses to carry. Either way, it always makes me wonder whether some defensive gear gets bought because of its looks rather than the job it can perform.

I work in a white-collar office environment and, as such, I’ve gotten used to wearing “business casual” clothes for most of the work week. I’ve been blessed to work in

environments that don’t ban concealed carry on the premises, but to avoid any askance glances from co-workers and clients, I still make sure to tuck in my shirt and remain as inconspicuous as possible. This limits the space I have to carry gear to just my two front pockets or, if I’m willing to push things — and I’m not — maybe an ankle holster, a tuckable IWB holster or a belly band.

Learning what to carry when limited to very little space taught me what’s actually important in everyday carry. There just isn’t much room in the pockets of a pair of khakis, so I quickly learned to pare down my everyday carry to just the essentials (apart from my keys and wallet): a small pocket pistol (specifically a Ruger LCPII .380 ACP) in a pocket holster, a small knife (a CRKT Pazoda 2), a Streamlight Pro-Tac flashlight and an extra magazine for the LCP II.

1. THINKING THROUGH YOUR DAY

My approach to what I carry on a day-in, day-out basis is to divide the items I carry into three groups, based on how I use them throughout the day:

- Things I have with me to identify who I am to others
- Things I have with me to help me live my life more easily
- Things I have with me to help save my life or the life of someone else

The things I have with me to identify who I am to others include my wedding ring and wallet. The things I have that help me live my life more easily include a flashlight, cell phone and credit card. The things I have with me to help save my life include my knife and defensive pistol. There is, of course, some crossover between the three groups. A flashlight can help me live an easier life by ensuring I

don't stumble in the dark and it can also save my life in a deadly force encounter. A knife makes opening up packages a lot easier, and it's also a dandy defensive tool.

Knife aside, though, the things I have with me to save my life are dedicated just to that task. In the previous example of my "business casual" EDC, my pistol does not serve a dual purpose: It is there to protect my life or the lives of those around me, and that is all I require of it. It stays in its holster in a pocket all by itself and, if it comes out, it comes out to defend a life against death or great bodily harm.

I could free up more room to carry other stuff if I switched to carrying my LCPII in a tuckable IWB holster or maybe a belly band or ankle holster or even an off-body carry system like a day planner or messenger bag holster, but I've tested many different ways to carry an LCP-sized sidearm (including all of the aforementioned) and the fastest way I've found to get my gun into action is through pocket carry. This is doubly true if I start the draw with my hand resting innocuously on my gun. I've found that I can draw and put a shot on a target 7 yards away in a little less than a second if I start with my hand on the gun in the pocket, which for me is a big, big reason not to switch to another form of carry for that particular little gun.

But that's my pistol ... what about everything else?

How will all of the lines intersect with regard to what is just for making my life easier, what is there to identify me and what is there to save my life?

2. STARTING OFF SMALL

If you're severely limited in the amount of space you have on-board for carrying your defensive gear, you have to open with one very specific, sometimes difficult, question: What is the minimum I need?

What is the minimum gear you need to identify who you are? For most of us, that's our keys and our wallets. If space is a serious issue, start off by paring down the keys you carry and streamlining what's in your wallet. I found I was carrying a number of customer loyalty

“IF YOU'RE SEVERELY LIMITED IN THE AMOUNT OF SPACE YOU HAVE ON-BOARD FOR CARRYING YOUR DEFENSIVE GEAR, YOU HAVE TO OPEN WITH ONE VERY SPECIFIC, SOMETIMES DIFFICULT, QUESTION: WHAT IS THE MINIMUM I NEED?”

cards for stores I rarely visited, and I was lugging around keys for locks that I basically never used. Reducing the number of cards in my wallet to the bare minimum and leaving excessive keys at home freed up a lot of room inside my pockets, and it might be able to do the same for you.

Now it's time to tackle the things that make your life easier, and let's start off with two of mankind's most basic tools.

3. GETTING TO THE POINT

We've known since the caveman days that a sharp knife and a bright light are two of the things that set us apart from animals, and a knife and a flashlight should be a part of your EDC gear. I understand that some people work in environments where "weapons" like knives are prohibited and, if that's your case, you'll need to figure out what works for you and what will have to be

left at home. However, for the rest of us, I've found that no one in a normal office environment freaks when they see an innocuous little number, like a small pen or a Swiss Army knife.

Just as any gun is better than no gun, any knife is better than no knife. If I'm in a more discreet environment, I find that smaller knives, like the CRKT Pazoda 2 (crkt.com/pazoda-2.html), can be clipped onto a pocket and raise no eyebrows whatsoever, and if you really want to get stealthy with where you keep your knife, check out the

Böker Credit Card knife (bo-kerusa.com/pocketknives/boker-plus/hunting-knives-outdoor-knives/credit-card-knife-01bo010)

or the SOG Cash Card (sogknives.com/cash-card-knife-trap-blister.html).

A knife just makes too much sense not to have on you at all times. Plus, it's a pretty decent self-defense tool as well. Unless you work or wind up somewhere that bans knives completely, with legal ramifications for not playing along, just carry one. You'll be glad you did.

4. SEEING THE LIGHT

A small flashlight — any kind of flashlight — is an absolute must-have for me. The little Streamlight I carry around is bright enough to light up even the darkest room, and because it uses two AAA batteries, it's slim enough to carry around in my pocket and still leaves room for lots of other gear. I carry it clipped onto my pocket, right beside my knife, and, to the casual observer, they look like a couple of pens in



my pocket. The simple fact of the matter is that half of the hours allotted to us on this earth are during the night time, so a flashlight isn't just a good idea ... it's an absolute necessity. I've carried a small flashlight of some kind with me for decades now, long before I carried a gun, and it's come in handy time after time over the years.

More than that, though, a flashlight — especially a modern flashlight that kicks out hundreds of lumens — can save your life. An extra-bright flashlight can temporarily blind an opponent at night, giving you a few valuable seconds to make an escape, draw a weapon or come up with another way to resolve the situation.

5. EXTRA AMMO OR A BACKUP GUN

Making a list of everything that can go wrong with a modern semi-automatic pistol will quickly

reveal that carrying extra ammo or even a backup gun makes a lot of sense.

Many of the most effective drills for solving serious malfunctions start with swapping out the magazine that's already in the gun, and this becomes an issue if there is no magazine to swap in. Also, if you carry a sidearm with limited ammo capacity (like a snub-nosed revolver, a small pocket .380 pistol or a single-stack compact), having extra rounds ready to go or a secondary firearm makes even more sense. Defensive gun use statistics have shown us that armed citizens rarely need more than five rounds to save lives, but because the stakes are quite literally mortal, I'm not betting my life and the lives of my loved ones on "rarely." If I carry a pocket gun, I use the handy little magazine pouch that came with my Elite Survival Systems

pocket holster (elitesurvival.com/concealment-holsters/pocket-holster-concealment-kit/); otherwise, I carry a spare magazine in a Kydex magazine pouch on my belt on my weak-hand side, hidden under my concealment garment.

So, that's the extent of minimalist EDC that I can get away with carrying in my khakis-and-oxford world. If you have a little more room, there are a few other items that should come along for the ride if at all possible.

6. SMARTPHONE

I have friends who want their cell phones to just make phone calls. That can be understandable, but the fact is that a modern smartphone can offer extremely useful technologies, such as first-aid guides, emergency radio scanners, weather alerts and built-in GPS. In addition to all of that, when

an emergency happens and the cell phone towers are overloaded with traffic, short text messages can go out when phone calls can't, so get used to texting now (just not while you're driving). As an added feature, a smartphone also has a camera of surprisingly high quality that you can use to document what happened to you and the location of critical evidence even before law enforcement arrives.

7. TRAUMA KIT

I'm constantly amazed by how many of my fellow gun owners believe that if they're ever forced to defend themselves against a deadly threat, shots won't be coming their way too. If you make no plans for dealing with the effects of a gunshot wound on yourself or someone you love, you're setting yourself up for tragedy. What good does it do you to stop a lethal threat to your family's life only to watch one of them bleed out in front of you because you didn't have a tourniquet within easy reach? Tourniquets are far safer to use today than they were even 10 years ago, and the old Boy Scout adage of, "Use a tourniquet, lose the limb," is far outdated.

There are several options out there for tourniquets these days, such as the SOF-TT (<http://www.tacmedsolutions.com/SOF-Tactical-Tourniquet>) and CAT (<http://www.combattourniquet.com>) tourniquets that have been battle-proven overseas, and many companies like PHLster (<https://www.phlsterholsters.com/product/flatpack-tourniquet-carrier/>) have come up with innovative ways to

make carrying a tourniquet as easy as carrying a spare magazine. There's also the option of carrying a full-bore trauma kit in an ankle carrier (<https://www.narescue.com/ankle-trauma-kits>). Get a trauma kit, learn how to use it and keep it nearby, because the life you save might be your own.

8. LESS-LETHAL OPTIONS

Traditionally, this has meant some kind of aerosol pepper spray, or perhaps a TASER or other elec-

“LET'S NOT FORGET THAT A WELL-CONSTRUCTED MODERN TACTICAL FLASHLIGHT CAN BE A VERY EFFECTIVE LESS-LETHAL OPTION IF IT'S USED TO TEMPORARILY BLIND AN OPPONENT WITH A POWERFUL BEAM OF LIGHT. IT CAN ALSO TURN INTO AN EFFECTIVE LESS-LETHAL STRIKING TOOL, IF NEEDED.”

tronic weapon of some sort. Pepper spray comes in all shapes and sizes, making it easy for almost anyone to carry; I have either a small pocket canister (<https://www.sabrered.com/pepper-spray/compact-pepper-spray>) with me if I'm being more low-key than usual; otherwise, I have a larger canister clipped to my belt, right behind the extra magazine for my pistol.

Let's not forget that a well-constructed modern tactical flashlight can be a very effective less-lethal option if it's used to temporarily blind an opponent with a powerful beam of light. It can also turn into an effective less-lethal striking tool, if needed.

BACK TO BASICS

Even though "business casual" means I can't carry as much gear as I do on the weekends, I still have the basic necessities of life covered, and I don't look like I'm about to execute a SWAT raid on a drug

house. I don't subscribe to the "two is one, one is none" idea for anything other than the items I need to defend my life: I have a pistol, spare ammo and a knife to provide layers of protection there.

Thankfully, I haven't needed to use my pistol, but what I have needed to do is walk out to my car through a darkened parking lot after seeing a movie with my family or open up a package at the mailbox with more than just my fingernails. While it's good to have a pistol on

me most all the time to deal with potential grievous bodily harm, that's not the only type of bodily harm out there, so having a less-lethal

option with me as well as my pistol makes a lot of sense. As such, we need to pay as much attention to the rest of the things we carry with us as we do to our defensive firearm.

As always, though, the most important piece of gear you can carry is between your ears. Think carefully when choosing what you carry; make sure that it's the best choice for your particular circumstances and that it is the gear or equipment best suited to you remaining as safe as possible as you go about your day.





GAIN CONFIDENCE, PREPAREDNESS & PEACE OF MIND

*WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO THE
U.S. CONCEALED CARRY ASSOCIATION*

www.USCCA.com
1-877-677-1919



Compliments of JohnsonGroupTAC.com