THE PREPARED CITIZEN

MASTERING HANDGUN FIT FOR YOUR HAND

FOR ACCURATE TRIGGER CONTROL

THE CARRY GUY®

ARE YOU READY?™

The Carry Guy Complete Manual: Choosing a Handgun That Fits Your Hand

Safety First

Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction. Keep your finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard until your sights are on the target and you have decided to shoot. Treat every firearm as loaded. Be sure of your target and what is beyond it. This material summarizes standard descriptions of handgun fit, grip seating, and trigger finger placement from NRA publications, Shooting Illustrated, The Armory Life, and common training literature. It is not a substitute for in-person professional training or live-fire evaluation under qualified supervision. Fit must be confirmed with the specific firearm in hand.

Who This Is For

Anyone selecting a first handgun or replacing one that feels awkward. Shooters whose groups string left or right despite practice. Anyone who has been told to buy a model solely because of popularity, color, or another person's preference.

What Proper Fit Means

Proper fit allows a high, consistent grip with the web of the hand seated high on the backstrap, full contact of the fingers around the grip, and the trigger finger able to reach the trigger face with the pad (or appropriate portion of the finger) so the press can be straight to the rear without shifting the sights. Controls (magazine release, slide stop, safety) must be reachable without breaking the grip.

When to Check Fit

Before purchase. During dry practice. Whenever groups string laterally or the shooter feels they must shift the hand to reach the trigger. After any change in backstraps or grips.

Where to Evaluate

At a retailer or range that allows handling the unloaded firearm. With the specific model and any installed backstraps or grip modules. In both strong-hand and two-hand grips.

How: Complete Instruction on Fit

Grip Seating

Place the web of the strong hand as high as possible on the backstrap without interfering with slide or hammer movement. Wrap the middle, ring, and little fingers around the grip so they contact the frame. Documented guidance from NRA-related materials notes that fingertips should generally reach near the midline of the opposite side of the grip without excessive

stretching or large gaps. Insufficient reach indicates the grip is too large; excessive overlap can limit support-hand contact.

Trigger Reach

Trigger reach is the distance from the high point of the backstrap to the face of the trigger. With a proper high grip established, the center of the pad of the index finger should contact the trigger face on most modern striker-fired pistols. Some sources note that longer, heavier triggers (certain revolvers or double-action systems) may benefit from contact nearer the distal joint for leverage.

If the finger must stretch or only the tip contacts the trigger, reach is too long. If the finger inserts past the first joint and contacts the frame, reach is too short. Interchangeable backstraps or grip modules (available on many polymer-frame pistols) change this dimension. A smaller backstrap shortens reach; a larger one increases it.

Too Much or Too Little Finger on the Trigger

Documented observations (The Armory Life, USA Carry, training articles):

- Too little finger (primarily the tip): The natural arc of the finger tends to push the muzzle toward the support side for a right-handed shooter.
- Too much finger (past the first joint or deep into the crease): The press can torque the gun toward the strong side.

Ideal placement allows a straight rearward press that does not disturb the sight picture. Placement is individual and depends on hand size relative to the specific firearm. Consistent placement matters more than an absolute “pad only” rule when the gun fits.

Grip Circumference and Shape

Circumference around the grip at the middle-finger level affects how completely the hand can close. Slimmer single-stack or reduced-size grips suit smaller hands; wider double-stack grips suit larger hands. Excessive circumference forces the shooter to shift the hand or reach for the trigger. Insufficient circumference can leave gaps that reduce control. Texture should provide friction without creating hot spots under repeated use.

Controls and Other Factors

Magazine release, slide stop/release, and any safety or decocker must be reachable with the strong-hand thumb or support-hand thumb without releasing the grip. Grip angle, overall size, and weight affect comfort but are secondary to trigger reach and seating. Do not select a firearm solely on appearance, color, or another person’s recommendation without verifying personal fit.

How to Test Before Buying

1. Establish a high, consistent grip on the unloaded firearm.
2. Check trigger-finger placement on the pad without stretching or over-inserting.
3. Confirm all controls are reachable.
4. Present to a target and dry-press while watching the sights for movement.
5. If available, try different backstrap sizes.
6. Live-fire only after confirming fit, under qualified supervision.

Common Errors

- Buying based on recommendation, popularity, or color without personal fit check.
- Ignoring trigger reach and forcing the hand into position.
- Using too large or too small a grip for the hand.
- Accepting a firearm that requires shifting the grip to press the trigger.

Special Considerations

Hand size varies widely. Left-handed shooters must confirm control placement. Some manufacturers offer interchangeable backstraps and grip panels specifically to adjust reach and circumference. There is not universal consensus on exact pad versus distal-joint placement; published instruction presents both as functional when they produce a straight press for the individual and firearm. Live-fire verification under professional instruction is required to confirm results.

Conclusion

A handgun that fits places the web of the hand high on the backstrap, allows the trigger finger to reach the trigger face with appropriate contact for a straight press, and permits operation of controls without shifting the grip. Test these elements personally rather than relying on recommendations or appearance.

For hands-on training go to www.thecarryguy.com.

EMP
CAL 5mm