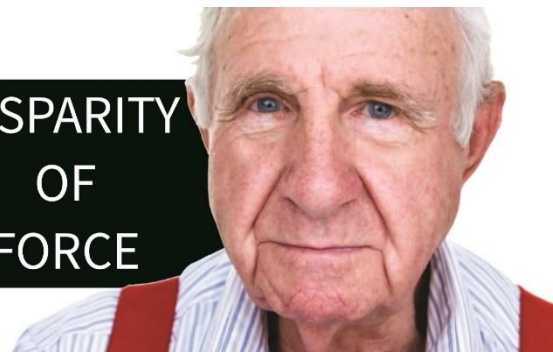


# CCW Tips & Tactics for Older Armed Citizens

As we get older, we must keep in mind that we can still be a target for criminal attack. In fact, we may become even more of a target as the years catch up with us. The crooks see the gray hair, the wrinkles and figure that we will be less likely to resist and less likely to be armed. Age may cause us to have physical problems to deal with, but many of them can be overcome. We owe it to ourselves and our families to be as tough a target as is humanly possible. Here are a few ideas to help older defensive shooters deal with their issues.

DISPARITY  
OF  
FORCE



If you say “personal defense” to most people, I expect they would immediately start thinking about guns. I like guns and have made my living for my entire adult life with guns, one way or another. But let me suggest a few things, in no particular order, that might be just as important as guns for personal defense.

## 1. Use the Most Powerful Handgun That You Can Shoot Quickly and Accurately.

You may be surprised to learn that this is what I tell all shooters, regardless of their age. However, you may have found that, due to infirmities, you can no longer manage that .357 Mag. or .45 ACP pistol. This doesn't mean that you should quit. It means that you should scale down to a 9 mm Luger, .38 Spl., .380 ACP, or even .22 LR, depending upon your needs and abilities.

These smaller calibers may not be as capable, but they sure do beat fighting with your fists. The lighter the caliber, the more important bullet placement becomes. So, you'll have to practice more and work on delivering the best bullet placement possible.

## 2. Situational Awareness

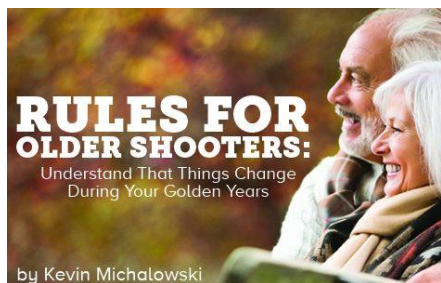
How much time do you spend training your eyes and ears to be alert for what is going on around you? It really does take training and practice.

Just yesterday I saw a big, strapping young man walking his dog right down the middle of the street. His ear buds were in and he was bopping to the music. More importantly, he didn't have a clue that anyone was anywhere around until I drove my car right past him.

Once you begin to really see and hear the things that are going on around you, you will begin to see and hear those things that just don't fit and have the potential for danger. Why does that person asking you for the time have to come within touching distance to hear the answer? Why has the same car driven down your street for the third time in an hour? Why does that person approaching your cash register look so nervous?

## 3. Understanding The Body Language of Anger

People who are overcome with an unreasonable anger, a rage, nearly always give off body language that will clue you in to the danger. Clenching and unclenching the fists, an unwavering stare, rapid, shallow breathing, all may be signs of impending violence.



There are many other such characteristics of a person about to commit violence. Numerous books and online articles have been written about this. Have you read any? Right in line with this is developing skills to diffuse an argument, or confrontation, that is headed south. One of the techniques is called Transactional Analysis. The entire topic is worth studying in depth and will give you tools that you can use to stop a problem before it ever starts.

#### **4. Hardening Any Potential Targets**

There are a number of things that can be done to make the average home a harder target for home invasions. And most of them don't cost a lot of money, while some don't cost anything at all. All of your exterior doors should be solid and have good quality locks on them.

But even good locks don't work unless you take the time to actually lock them. And it is an absolutely superb idea to lock your exterior doors while you are in the house. The last thing you do before bedtime is to make sure that all of your exterior doors and windows are locked. This won't keep a crook out, but it will take time and he will have to make noise to get in.

Another excellent idea is to have good lights installed on the exterior of your house. Many bad guys like to work in the dark and may not be interested if your home is well lit. In line with that, it would be great to have a master light switch in your bedroom that will turn on all of those outside lights.

As a matter of fact, you should have another switch right beside it to turn on all of the lights inside the house, too. I have friends who turn off their cell phones when they go to bed. I guess it is because they don't want to wake them up if it rings. I leave my cell phone on and have it on the nightstand right next to my flashlight and pistol. Should the home invaders cut your phone lines, you can still quickly call 911 for help.

#### **5. Consider Changing Carry Positions.**

One of the most common defensive carry techniques is to wear the handgun on your strong-side hip, just behind the hip bone. Unfortunately, with aging, many shooters lose mobility in their joints. To make a draw from this popular position, your shoulder must move up and back, and it must do it quickly. Some folks just have a tough time with this.

A better choice for the aging shooter might be the appendix carry; that is, wearing the handgun on the strong side but in front of the hip bone. The shoulder does not have to move so radically with this technique. The same may be true with the crossdraw carry method. Both carry the handgun on the front side of the body and will be easier to get to and allow for a quick pistol presentation.

#### **6. Dealing with Fuzzy Sights.**

About the time that we hit middle age, the sights on a handgun sure do start to look fuzzy, and a clear sight picture rapidly becomes a thing of the past. Some folks deal with this natural phenomenon by using the close-range portion of their bifocals. However, for all of us, glasses are the answer.

Even if you don't use bifocals, your optometrist can have a corner of your glasses ground so that you can see the sights clearly through that portion of the lens. If you don't feel comfortable discussing your shooting skills with your current optometrist, ask at your local shooting range or gun store until you can get the name of an optometrist who is a shooter. You'd be amazed at how many of these professionals enjoy the shooting sports and understand the needs of aging shooters.

#### **7. Weakness In the Hands and Forearms.**

Some older shooters find that, due to arthritis or some other ailment, they can no longer work the slide on a semi-automatic pistol. In most cases, I have found that they have been doing it wrong in the first place.

Too many shooters want to hold the auto pistol in their hand with the arm almost fully extended. Then they use the thumb and index finger of their support hand, at the very back of the slide, to work the slide and chamber a round. This whole technique looks very much like the way we shot slingshots when we were kids. Regardless of age, this is a very poor technique and is an indication of someone who is a real tenderfoot regarding this business of self-defense.

The closer your hands are to your chest, the more strength you have in your hands and arms. Hold the pistol close to your chest and parallel to your chest, with the muzzle pointed to the side. However, you should be conscious that the muzzle is still pointed in a safe direction at all times.



Put your support hand over the top of the pistol, in the area of the ejection port, and grasp the slide firmly with your whole hand and all of your fingers. At the same time that you pull the slide to the rear with your support hand, you should push forward with your strong hand. The isometric push-pull, along with holding the gun close to the body, utilizes much more of your bodily strength and is a much more positive way to charge your auto pistol.

However, there are those who simply are dealing with issues that make them too weak to run an auto slide. They might consider making the transition to a double-action revolver. The action of loading and unloading a DA revolver requires much less muscle strength. When transitioning to a revolver, however, don't hesitate to have a professional gunsmith smooth up the action to make the double-action trigger pull as easy as possible.

### **8. Increase Mobility with Exercise.**

The older we get, the more important exercise is to our maintaining our body strength and mobility. If you have health issues, it is critical that you do not start an exercise program without consulting with a physician. Just as with the optometrist, you may find it a bit more comfortable to find a physician who enjoys the shooting sports.

When you start hunting for a doctor who is a member of our shooting fraternity, you will be amazed at just how many of them there are. I don't want to sound "New Age" here, but the fact is that a yoga class, especially one for older folks, is a great way to increase your agility and mobility. However, if you have any doubts about your ability, take the time to consult with a physician.

It is critically important, as the years go by, to continue to refuse to be a victim. Seek the advice of other aging shooters, use your mind to solve your particular problems as they relate to shooting skills, and simply say to yourself, "I am tough, I am an American shooter, and I am *not* going to give up."

### **9. Studying Reports of Actual Criminal Attacks**

Read the [Armed Citizen®](#) columns and study newspaper articles. The important thing is to critique those reports. What did they do right? What did they do wrong? What could have happened? What *should* have happened? And, by all means, have discussions with your family members about these events.

Through these discussions you will begin to develop a defensive plan that suits you and yours. So, by all means, keep going to the range and practicing with your defensive firearms. Sign up for that defensive shooting class, too. But understand that personal defense is about a lot more things than just guns. The most important defensive tool? Right between your ears.

Additional reading & study:

<https://www.americanrifleman.org/content/5-ccw-tips-for-older-armed-citizens/>

<https://www.americanrifleman.org/content/4-essential-elements-of-self-defense/>



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