

MCS 169: HOME DEFENSE RIFLE CHEAT SHEET

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It's up to you to decide what's going to work best for you as a home-defense firearm. That said, my personal choice for home defense, and the best option in my opinion, is the home defense rifle. That doesn't mean you shouldn't also have a handgun at the ready; the most effective weapon is always going to be the one you can get your hands on when a home invader has just busted through your front door.

THE AR-PLATFORM CARBINE RIFLE AS HOME DEFENSE WEAPON

These four factors make the AR platform great for home defense:

- **Ease of shooting.** It may look complicated, but it's actually simple to operate.
- **Accuracy.** Long guns are naturally more accurate and easier to shoot than handguns. They have lower recoil and is easier to control for follow-up shots.
- **Firepower.** The AR offers excellent magazine capacity with 30-round mags.
- **Stopping power.** The power of a carbine round is substantial.

LIABILITIES OF THE HOME DEFENSE CARBINE...?

Each of the perceived drawbacks of the carbine can be shot down as follows:

- **Overpenetration.** The best defense for "over-penetration" is to shoot accurately. Accuracy is one great advantage of the AR. Put rounds in the bad guys, not in the scenery. Even if you miss, over-penetration from carbine rounds IS A MYTH.
- **Legal liability.** A court is going to use the "reasonable man" standard. As long as you can explain why you chose the AR carbine, and as long as you come across as responsible, the weapon will be no more liability than most other guns.
- **High cost.** While a custom-built AR carbine can be very expensive, there are plenty of lower-end AR-platform rifles that will do the job at reasonable cost.

AMMUNITION MATTERS

Don't just use regular military-style ball ammo. While over-penetration from the carbine rifle is largely a myth, military ball ammo will go and go compared to more purpose-designed ammunition for the carbine.

- Invest in a home-defense round for the AR. You want an expanding or hollow point cartridge.
- I recommend a 55 grain hollow point .223, such as the Hornady super performance GMX. It's a good stopper that's less likely to exit the attacker.

BENEFITS OF THE AR PISTOL

I don't actually use a full-size AR-15 carbine for home-defense inside the house.

- I recommend an AR pistol. It has a shorter barrel and cannot be used with a stock or a vertical foregrip (which would reclassify it according to ATF guidelines).
- An AR pistol CAN legally have a buffer tube jutting out from it that reduces recoil; this can be braced against your shoulder with your cheek against it for more stable, accurate shooting.
- The AR pistol is better for close quarters because it's shorter. It offers great maneuverability but with the stopping power and capacity of a carbine.
- The AR pistol can be fired with one hand more easily than a full-size AR-15 carbine can be. This is extremely useful if you need to use your other hand and arm (to, say, carry a child or open a door) and even if one of your arms is injured.
- While you lose a bit of velocity from the shorter barrel of an AR pistol, that's actually a good thing, because it reduces further the risk of over-penetration.
- While the AR pistol is more expensive, it's a good investment because it's so useful for home defense.

ACCESSORIES TO CONSIDER

You don't need a ton of accessories, but here are a few to consider:

- **Sling.** You want a sling for any two-handed weapon you have, including shotguns. Without a sling, there's no way to "holster" the long gun. You need a way to "put it down" while keeping it with you.
- **Light.** You absolutely need some kind of light mounted to your weapon. Even during daylight, there may be dark corners of a home or structure where you need more light to positively identify your target. You CANNOT afford to identify a target incorrectly in low light.
- **Red dot sight.** This allows you to acquire your target more quickly and easily while keeping both eyes open. I have a Holosun model, but there are many others. You don't have to bring the weapon up as high to acquire your target when you use a high-profile red dot sight. At close ranges you won't need to worry about compensating for the height of the sights, either.

In the end, home defense comes down to what you feel most comfortable using. You must know your firearm inside and out. It should be an extension of your body.

Finally, it all comes down to tactics — at least mostly. You're better off practicing with what you have, and practicing your tactics with what you have, than worrying about choosing the best home defense firearm. Whatever you choose, get out there and practice with it. Practice clearing your home. Know it. Go dry-fire right now. Don't wait.

Prepare. Train. Survive.