



Choosing A Fighting Knife

with Bram Frank from www.CSSDSC.com

The Knife Can Be A Backup Or Primary Weapon

A knife is a formidable weapon if it is...

- The right knife
- You know how to use it

Fixed Blades For Protection

A fixed blade can never fold on your fingers.

- This weapon is always ready to deploy.
- Check the knife to see if it fits in your hand and you can grip it well.
- How does the fixed blade fit in your clothing? A lot of knives have really bad carry systems.
- Does the knife afford good traction? Under stress we lose fine motor skills.
- Your fixed blade should be no bigger than your folder and should fit in your hand — no more than four to five inches of blade.
- You want a sheath or carry system that holds the knife close to your body.
- You definitely want a fixed blade with a guard so your hand can't slip onto the blade.

Cons Of Fixed Blades For Protection

Fixed blades have relatively few cons.

- The handle of the fixed blade could be a problem, if it is slick with sweat or blood, or you're wearing gloves. Fixed blade knives might also hang up on the draw, and some are heavy.
- Understand that fixed blade knives may look more like weapons than folding knives, which has an impact in court. Carry the smallest blade you can get away with.

Combat Folders For Protection

For many, the folder is the best choice.

- They're smaller and very convenient.
- You must test how it fits in your pocket.
- You must test how the knife fits in your hand when open, too.
- Always CHECK THE LOCK.
- Tip up means the butt of the knife is up out of your pocket, with the hinge at the bottom and the tip of the knife pointed up.
- Tip down means the head of the knife is at the top of your pocket, with the tip at the bottom and pointed down into the pocket.

Cons Of Combat Folders For Protection

Folding knives do have some cons.

- Many users don't understand "tip up vs. tip down" carry. If you have dig deep in your pocket and reorient the knife on the draw, you're already several beats behind.
- A tip up knife may open in the pocket, resulting in your sticking your own hand on the draw.
- Bram Frank dislikes tip up because of the need to deploy the tool under stress. He believes tip down allows you to pull the knife out of your pocket without thinking about it.

Design Features To Look For

There are lots of choices on the market.

- Trainers that are visibly identifiable (because, say, they're red) are desirable.
- A broad, flat pocket clip is preferable.
- A lock on the back is safer and more visible, never "out of battery" to the user.