



The Truth About Night Sights

with Jeff Anderson for www.ModernCombatAndSurvival.com

Your Options For Firearms Night Sights

You really have two basic choices: fiber optic sights and true “night sights.”

- Fiber optic sights gather light from outside the sights and bounce it around down the tube, lighting it up.
- Night sights contain a tiny amount of radioactive gas that actually makes the sight glow in the dark, without needing to be charged up by the sun.
- Both have advantages and disadvantages.

Tritium Night Sights: Cons

Negatives of tritium night sights include...

- These are expensive (\$50 to \$150 or more).
- Most attacks do happen in low light, but at extremely close distances, so you may not be using your sights anyway. That begs the question: Why spend the extra money?
- Night sights tend to get washed out by direct light in front of them. If you’re using any kind of mounted or handheld flashlight, the night sight won’t do you much good when your light is on the target.

Tritium Night Sights: Pros

Positives of tritium night sights include...

- You’ll most likely have some ambient light, especially in urban areas and parking lots. Even the moon gives off some light.
- Flashlights can fail, which means you’ll only have your night sights for seeing the target.
- Think beyond your own tactical needs. For example, if you have a spouse or a child who can shoot, and they’re not very gun savvy, night sights give them SOMETHING.

The Bottom Line For Night Sights

You **MUST** positively identify your target before you pull the trigger, and **NO** sights will help you in low light if you’re unsure of your target. Therefore you **MUST** carry a tactical light.

- Tactics and training beat equipment any day of the week. Adding fancy night sights won’t make you a better shooter.
- Upgrade your sights for low light conditions with this in mind. After all, if 80% of attacks happen in low light, why **WOULDN’T** you?

Which Sight To Buy

What is your life worth? Buy the best you can.

- Look at the worst-case scenario. That means you have no flashlight and limited ambient light. Night sights win the day every time. Fiber optics may be better with a spotlighted target because they don’t “wash out, so for that reason, go with fiber optic if you run a weapon-mounted light.
- I, on the other hand, recommend you use a separate handheld light for more versatility.
- Spotlighting tends to focus your eyes directly on your target, while aiming slightly downward tends to make you more aware of your surroundings/other potential attackers.
- For home defense, I don’t prefer a handgun; I use a red-dot optic on my long gun. My spouse has a laser on her handgun... but these systems can fail, so I do have a tritium backup sight on those weapons that accept them. (To keep costs down, I use them for the front sight only.)
- No matter what you choose, make sure it is correctly installed/gunsmithed. Check your alignment at the range to be sure.

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