

How to Make Your Home Your Personal Fortress

Jason Hanson

Introduction

Hello, my name is Jason Hanson.

I was a CIA officer from 2003–2010.

You may have seen me on the popular television show *Shark Tank*, NBC's *Today show*, *Dateline*, or *The Rachael Ray Show*.

I've also been interviewed by *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fox News*, and *Forbes*.

Today, I'm a home security and personal protection expert.

My experience working for the CIA has uniquely qualified me to find the mistakes most Americans make in securing and protecting their homes.

I see these mistakes almost everywhere I go, including in my own neighborhood.

In this Home Defense Protocol, I'll show you how to avoid the most critical mistakes most Americans make when it comes to securing their home.

I'll also show you specific ways to make your home more secure, starting today.

There are a number of simple, affordable things that you can do to protect yourself and your family from a home invasion. Done correctly, they could mean the difference between surviving a break-in or being caught unaware and made a victim of one of these tragedies.

I'm going to cover the basics of how to secure your home, additional steps you can take to keep your house secure from break-ins at night, as well as some personal defense tactics you can use if an invader does make it into your home while you're there.

Don't allow yourself to become a victim. Your safety is in your own hands.

Best,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Hanson'.

Jason Hanson
Former CIA Officer
Safety and survival expert

Part 1: Home Defense

Creating Your Personal Fortress

Get an Alarm System

In 2014, actress Sandra Bullock was the victim of a home invasion. She heard noises in the middle of the night, peered out her bedroom door, and saw a man walking down her hallway. She immediately locked the door and called the police, who arrived about 13 minutes later, found the man (a “superfan”/stalker), and arrested him.

According to the Internet (which never lies), Ms. Bullock has a net worth of \$200 million. Now, I’m no mathematician, but with that kind of money, you can afford one heck of an alarm system. Perhaps Ms. Bullock does have an alarm system and she just forgot to turn it on that night.

Either way, the entire situation could have been prevented.

You’d be amazed at the number of stories I’m told about people who have break-ins because they forgot to turn on their alarm systems. I do realize that people are lazy and may not want to get out of bed and turn on an alarm.

However, these days almost every alarm system comes with a key fob that you can leave on your nightstand to turn on the alarm while in bed. What’s more, these key fobs have panic buttons, which you can push to set off the alarm and have police notified.

Everyone ought to have an alarm system these days, because they’re so inexpensive. It doesn’t matter if you use **ADT** or **Brink’s** or whomever. They all do the same thing. Find out who gives you the best deal and get an alarm system this week if you don’t already have one.

You can also avoid paying an annual contract by using **SimpliSafe**, a DIY alarm system that you can install yourself. Visit their website at simplisafe.com for more details.

Also, make sure that you get a system that includes motion sensors throughout your house. If by some rare chance a burglar is able to bypass your entry sensors, as soon as they step foot in your house, you want the motion sensors to trigger and have the alarm sound.

How to Secure Your Windows and Doors

Having reliable locks for the doors and windows in your home is a simple, vital step in home defense.

Let's start with the locks. One of the most common brands of locks used in the U.S. is Kwikset. They're a go-to brand for contractors and builders, and there's a pretty good chance you use them in your own home.

If you do, go to the nearest Home Depot and buy new locks immediately.

Kwikset locks are poorly made and easily compromised. I myself can pick one easily, and so can most criminals.

Instead, I recommend buying **Schlage** or **Medeco** locks. You can get Schlage locks at Home Depot or any other major hardware store. Medeco locks are a little harder to find. I'd recommend searching for a local dealer using their website, **www.medeco.com**. Simply select "Dealer Locator" from their home page and type in your ZIP code to find out where you can purchase Medeco locks near you.

I also recommend having a reliable, solid deadbolt from either **Schlage** or **Medeco**.

Getting a solid-core door is a good idea, too. One that's made out of sturdy, solid materials, like wood, steel, or iron.

It's a sad fact that several types of doors can be kicked in with minimal effort. In fact, as I'm sure you're aware, most doors are hollow, and if you have a teenage son, you know how easily these can be kicked through. Purchasing a high-quality solid-core door, particularly for your front door, is very important.

Many of us also have glass sliding doors in the rear of our homes. Hopefully, if someone breaks these doors to try to get in, you will hear the glass shatter and be prepared to meet the intruder. If you really want to ensure you'll hear them, I recommend putting a glass break detector on your glass doors. If someone jostles these doors at all, a loud alarm is set off. One example is the **Doberman Security SE-0106-4PK Ultra-Slim Window Alarm**, available on Amazon for only \$29.99.

It's important that you reinforce the locks on these doors too. You can

do so easily and cheaply by getting a wooden bar to put along the floor track. This costs about \$2.00 at any home goods store. Just cut it half an inch shorter than the total track distance.

Now if an intruder wants to come in that way, they'll have to break the door. As I mentioned, the noise that creates will give you time to spring into action, especially if you use a glass break detector.

I'd also recommend locking and reinforcing your windows. Smaller wooden pieces similar to the bars for sliding doors can go in the bottom of window tracks or along the inside of the frames.

Being Prepared on Every Level of Your Home

There's one sound that makes even hardened criminals run in the other direction during an attempted home invasion: gunshots.

I have at least one gun stored on every level of my home. Because I have small children, every one of these guns is in a rapid access safe, made by **GunVault** or **Stack-On** or **Console Vault**. I've set it up this way so that if someone breaks into my home, I don't have to worry about running all of the way upstairs (and possibly past the intruder) to retrieve a firearm to defend myself.

But guns aren't the only preparedness item that I have on every level of my home. I also have a flashlight on every level so that they're easily accessible from anywhere in my home if the lights go out.

When it comes to flashlights, I have plenty of tactical flashlights that I carry with me always. Tactical flashlights are very small, with a high-powered beam, which makes them easy to use and reliable.

My tactical flashlights are made by **SureFire** and **Nextorch**. However, in addition to my tactical flashlights, I also have larger (nontactical) lights, which have batteries that will last for dozens of hours.

On the low price point of things is the **6V Eveready flashlight** that can be bought at hardware stores for about \$7. This is the large yellow flashlight that you've probably seen a million times. The beauty of this flashlight is that it lasts 100 hours before you need to get a new battery, and a new battery is only about \$8.00. If you're looking for a cheap, no-frills flashlight, this is it.

Recently, I got another larger flashlight that will also last 100 hours. The light is the **O2 Beam by Nebo**. It's a brand-new flashlight that has five different settings, ranging from 85 lumens with a 100-hour battery life to 420 lumens with a 20-hour life. It also has strobe and beacon settings.

I've been very impressed with this flashlight so far because not only does it have five settings, but you can adjust the light beam to go from being wide to a concentrated spotlight. Surprisingly, this flashlight isn't too expensive, only \$80, which is a good deal for this type of flashlight.

In addition to flashlights and guns, I also have food storage on every level of my home, in case we experience any type of flooding. I get all of my food storage from the LDS Cannery, run by the Mormon church. Don't worry — you don't have to be Mormon to qualify. Visit them at providentliving.lds.org to learn how to order canned goods.

The bottom line is crazy events seem to occur every week in this country that remind us about the importance of being prepared. So it's important to be prepared for any situation by gathering the correct supplies and making sure that they are easily accessible from anywhere in your home.

Buy These Batteries

Have you ever taken a count of how many items you use every day that rely on batteries? Electric toothbrushes, children's toys, remote controls, flashlights... in the technological age that we live in, batteries are a necessity.

And because we rely on these devices and we want to be prepared when the electricity goes out (even if it's just for a few hours), it's important to have quality batteries. Sure, you can go to Wal-Mart and buy regular Energizer or Duracell batteries, but if you use your flashlights as often as I do, and if you use an electric toothbrush or any other item frequently, you may want to consider rechargeable batteries.

Now, rechargeable batteries are nothing new, but like every other product, you don't want to buy poor-quality rechargeable batteries that let you down when it counts. This is why I recommend you check out the **Panasonic Eneloop** rechargeable batteries. These are the ones that I personally use.

These batteries come pre-charged from the factory, which is an added

bonus — you can immediately put them to use. They can be recharged up to 2,100 times, which is not only convenient but will save you a ton of money over the years.

Another good thing about these batteries is that they actually maintain their charge when not in use. I have never left these batteries charged for years on end, but according to the company, they can maintain up to 70% of their charge after five years.

What's more, they can work in freezing temperatures all the way down to minus 4 degrees F without losing their charge.

The fact is these are tough batteries that will last. Even if they're not as glamorous as a gun or a knife, having high-quality batteries could come in handy much more often.

If you decide you want to get these batteries, you can buy them on Amazon.com by simply searching for "Panasonic Eneloop batteries."

Where to Hide Your Guns

As with all of your valuables, it's important to make your guns hard to find. Never store guns and valuables in your master bedroom (with the exception of your home defense gun, which should sit on your nightstand in a rapid access safe). The master bedroom is the first place burglars will look, as most burglars want to be in and out of your house in eight minutes.

You want to keep your guns in a place like an attic. This often requires a ladder to get to. In your attic, you want to store the guns in a box marked "old clothes" or "child's toys."

If you have a large gun safe, consider getting a dummy gun safe too. I know one guy who has his large dummy safe and then behind it, in a wall, is his real safe full of guns.

Other good ideas are the safes that look like an electrical box or a vent. A friend of mine owns a company called Console Vault. One of their products is called the Red Herring Secret Safe. It looks exactly like an electrical panel built into your wall but it is covered with "high voltage" warnings and nobody in their right mind would ever touch it.

Other places to consider are in your kitchen behind your pots and pans or in a fireplace (that you don't use) behind a stack of wood.

Wherever you decide to hide your guns, I do recommend having them locked up in some type of gun safe, even if it's just a small safe such as the **SnapSafe Lockbox** or the **GunVault NV200**.

Stop Oversharing

A Texas couple returned home from vacation to realize they'd been burglarized to the tune of over \$200,000.

The burglars had broken into a safe and stolen 45 guns, ammunition, gold coins, and jewelry. According to police, it appeared to be a well-planned job that took several hours, and the thieves likely knew that the couple was out of town.

Obviously, this is a terrible event for the couple, who lost family heirlooms and lots of money. But let's be honest here — it could have been prevented.

First, it's imperative to have an alarm system, especially if you have over \$200,000 worth of goods in your house. These days, alarm systems are so inexpensive there's no excuse not to have one.

Second, be careful of who you tell when you're going out of town. Make sure a trusted neighbor knows so that they can keep an eye out for anything suspicious. But DON'T post on Facebook. Anyone with ill intentions can easily see that post and get a bad idea. It's an easy trap that too many people fall for. If you must post pictures and brag about your trip, save it until after you return.

What Are Your Concentric Rings of Security?

When I worked for the CIA, I was based out of headquarters, in Langley, Virginia. What most people don't realize (unless you live in the D.C. area) is that the CIA has a sign out on the main road that reads, "George Bush Center for Intelligence."

In other words, the CIA headquarters isn't hidden, and anyone who wishes to can easily find it. This is why the CIA has a vast amount of physical security and why they perfectly execute the concentric rings of security.

But what are concentric rings of security?

In short, concentric rings of security are a layered defense system around a certain object or place. As you pass through each “ring,” or layer of defense, the security level increases.

Let me show how this applies to you and how you can use the rings in your own life...

Let's say you live in a single-family home, which many people in the U.S. do. The first ring of security might be some type of fence around the perimeter of your property. If you happen to live in a gated community, the first ring would be the gate that must be opened for someone to enter.

The thing is a criminal can easily jump a gate or a fence, which is why the outer ring is typically the weakest.

For the average homeowner, the second concentric ring is the exterior of your home. Do you have security cameras? Do you have lights or motion sensors? Do you have an alarm sign in your front yard? Do you have an alarm sign sticker on the sliding glass door into your home from your deck?

Continuing with the second ring... is your front door locked? Do you have a solid deadbolt? Do you close your garage door even when you're at home? Are all of your windows locked?

The third ring of security for your home is your “safe room.” In other words, if someone jumps your fence and kicks down your front door, where do you go with your family? Do you have a room that everyone can huddle in that has a cellphone to call police and, more importantly, a firearm that can be used to protect your family?

Remember, as a criminal passes through each ring of security, it's supposed to get tougher on them to accomplish their task (whatever task that might be).

So if their task is a home invasion and they've jumped the fence, kicked in your front door, and are about to kick in the bedroom where you and your family are hiding, then in that room, you need to be prepared to meet them with ultimate force.

After all, if they bash down the bedroom door and your wife and kids

are there but you're unprepared, you may have just let your whole family get murdered. (It may sound harsh, but it's true.)

This is why, in my opinion, the final ring of security should always include a firearm. The firearm is the great equalizer, and it's the only thing that gives the 18-year-old girl a chance against the 32-year-old, 200-pound, knife-wielding rapist.

Of course, the final ring of security can also include a solid wood door for your safe room to help you avoid having to use a firearm in self-defense, which should be everyone's goal — avoid if you can, but be prepared to fight back if you have no choice.

So if you've never given thought to the concentric rings of security and how they apply to your own home, give it some thought today. Think about how many layers of defense you have and how you plan to stop a criminal if, heaven forbid, they make it through every single layer and are standing in front of you and your loved ones.

Family Emergency Plan Steps

One question that I'm often asked is what you should do when a crisis actually hits. If you're at work when a terrorist attack or a terrible natural disaster occurs, what should you do to get to your family?

When these things happen, it causes mass chaos. That's why it's vital to have a family emergency plan in place, which all of the members of your family are aware of.

The first thing you want to do is go get the youngest and weakest members of the family. For me, this means going to school and getting my kids, starting with the youngest child.

Also, if you are unable to get in touch with one another, it's important for both you and your spouse to go to get the kids. In a crisis event, you hope for the best but always assume the worst. So I have to assume my wife is dead and that I need to go pick up the kids. My wife has to assume that I am dead and that she'll have to go pick up the kids.

Whoever gets to the first child leaves a note for their spouse. This is critical to do. In the bag in my car, I have some **Rite in the Rain** paper and an **Inkzall marker**. This marker can write on all types of wet and

oily surfaces. I also have Gorilla tape to tape the note to the preschool door or in some other easy-to-see place.

On this note, write something such as “Sandy, I got to the school first and picked up Lucy. I am headed to get Tom. Love, Jason. 10-13-15, 9:05 a.m.” (Always put the date and time so your spouse knows when you got there.)

Once you have gotten your kids, then you head home or to the designated place you’re supposed to meet the rest of your family (have two of them). Obviously, if your home or first designated meeting place is no longer standing or safe to enter, then you’ll go to the secondary meeting place, which can be anything from a church house to random parking lot or park. And if the secondary meeting place isn’t safe, you’ll go to a third place.

This is an incredibly simple plan that I recommend you talk with your spouse about tonight. In a true disaster, the chaos is going to be extreme, and you’ll be grateful you know exactly what to do and the places to meet your loved ones. Plus, don’t forget the paper that you can write on in the rain, the Inkzall marker, and the Gorilla tape.

You should also have a well-developed family emergency plan within your own home. Just as in the plan I just described, you’re going to want to get to the weakest or youngest members of your family first. Once you’ve established they are safe, clear your home, room by room, to look for intruders. I go into details on how to do this safely in the “Personal Defense” section of this protocol.

But the first thing that you should do to get started on your home defense family emergency plan is to create a panic room. Here’s how...

How to Build a Panic Room Without Spending a Fortune

It was about 1:30 a.m. when the large crash awoke me. I looked to my right at my wife, who immediately sat up too, and then I looked to the left to grab my flashlight and open up the gun safe on my nightstand. The safe was open in less than three seconds, and I retrieved my Glock 19 loaded with 124-grain Speer Gold Dot rounds. I then made my way to the top of my staircase to ensure that nobody would come up the stairs past me as my wife got our kids to our “panic room.”

As I was standing at the top of the stairs with my gun pointed downward, I was listening intently to hear who was in our house and what I needed to be prepared for. The thing is I didn't hear a peep. I stood at the top of the stairs for what seemed like an eternity but heard and saw no other signs of an intruder. Finally, I began to slowly make my way down the stairs to clear my home. After opening a number of closet doors, I was relieved to find the culprit of the noise that caused me to almost jump out of bed. We had an AeroBed on the top shelf of one of our closets. It happened to fall off and come crashing down on a bunch of kids' toys. Since the AeroBed weighs a ton, it caused the significant noise that woke my wife and me up.

Thankfully, it wasn't an intruder, but it was a great "dry run" to show that my wife and I were prepared for a home invasion and that we can react quickly to protect ourselves. So even though we didn't have to utilize our panic room that night, I was glad that we had it.

Let me quickly dispel some myths that have been created by Hollywood to sell movie tickets. A panic room isn't only for billionaires and multimillionaires, it doesn't have to cost several hundred thousand dollars, and it doesn't involve a bunch of fancy gizmos and sliding doors that move at the push of a button. In other words, it doesn't look like a room right out of a *Jetsons* cartoon. It's just a normal room in your house that has been prepared for an emergency.

The first step is to know where your panic room should be located. A lot of people mistakenly think that the panic room should be in the basement or that it should always be the master bedroom. The fact is, the location of the panic room should be the location of the member of your family that is the weakest or slowest. So if you have your 98-year-old mother living with you and she can't move very fast, then her room needs to be the panic room. Or if you have a 1-year-old child in the house, their nursery would be the panic room. If you think there's a home invasion taking place, you need to get your family in the panic room as quickly as possible. Having the room located in the "slowest" family member's room saves a lot of time.

Once you've identified the room, it's time to start fortifying it. Like I said, this doesn't mean spending six figures. It simply means getting a solid-core door made of metal or wood. Most people prefer a wood door because it looks better indoors. That's fine, because a wood door

is going to stop bullets and buy you time if someone is trying to get in.

The truth is, if you have cheap, hollow-core doors on your bedrooms like most people do, then an intruder can smash through one in seconds. A solid wood door is going to give you time to get ready to defend yourself before they break it down.

In addition to the solid-core door, install a quality deadbolt such as Schlage or Medeco in the inside of the room so you can keep the intruder out.

Once you've got the door and deadbolt installed, then it's time to get to the most important factor of all when it comes to the panic room: the "crash box." A crash box is a safe located in your panic room that contains the necessary supplies to fend off an intruder. A crash box is typically a medium-sized safe such as the **SentrySafe model SFW123DSB** or the **First Alert model 2096DF**. Both can be purchased on Amazon.

Look for something small and easy to access, not a gigantic gun safe that is going to take you forever to open. Once you have your crash box, it's time to fill it with the items you need. These include a handgun and ammunition (I like Glock, SIG Sauer, and Springfield when it comes to guns and Speer Gold Dot and Hornady for ammo), extra loaded magazines, a spare cellphone, a flashlight, medical items such as **QuikClot** and a **Combat Application Tourniquet (CAT)**, a fixed-blade knife, and whatever other items you choose to put in it.

If you ever do find yourself having to hunker down until police arrive (remember, average police response time can vary, so make sure you know what to expect in your area), then you should be prepared to fend off attackers for a good amount of time. The good news is unless you're a politician or celebrity who is more likely to face a coordinated attack, a home invasion will most likely involve some local thugs who are looking to get drug money for their next fix. Once they see you're well-armed and prepared to stop them, they'll probably flee your house and go looking for an easier victim.

While none of us wishes to ever experience a home invasion, the people I know that have gone through it were grateful they were prepared. In other words, this weekend, take a few minutes to designate a panic room, begin looking at solid-core doors, and start writing down the supplies you're going to have inside your crash box.

How to Prevent Your Door From Getting Kicked In

Criminals aren't usually the brightest bunch, which is why the majority of home invasions occur through the front or back door. To ensure that your door isn't easily kicked in and to give yourself extra time to get to your panic room, you may want to consider using a door barricade.

While it might sound like a big piece of equipment, a door barricade is actually quite small and you'll barely notice it. It's simply a metal plate that is secured to the floor directly in front of your door. This metal plate has a groove down the middle that allows you to insert a second metal plate, which goes perpendicular and blocks the door from opening. The door barricade that I like is called the **Nightlock**, available on Amazon. If you install one of these at home, it will be nearly impossible for someone to kick in your door.

The 6-Step Planning Process

I recently attended a three-day leadership retreat by a company called Becoming Your Best. The owners of the company are Steve and Rob Shallenberger.

One of the topics we covered during the three days was a six-step process to make sure you accomplish your goals and take action on priorities in your life.

Safety and survival is one of our top priorities, but far too many of us don't end up where we need to be. We talk about getting food storage or water storage or extra ammunition, but we often never get around to doing it.

So to help you become better prepared and take the necessary steps to ensure you survive a crisis, whatever it may be, let me share with you this six-step process.

Let's assume our task is to get a year's worth of food storage but we're overwhelmed because we've only got two weeks' worth of storage at the moment. The first step is to identify the vision: We want a year's worth of food storage.

The second step is to identify our current reality. Our current reality is that we have two weeks' worth of food storage but we want to have a

year's worth, so we need 50 more weeks of food. Since our current reality doesn't match our vision, we continue through the steps.

The third step is to clearly define the real issue. Ask "why" here until you really get down to it. Our real issue is that we don't know how to go about getting 50 more weeks of food storage.

The fourth step is to identify the options to achieving our goal. For example, we could go online and buy a year's supply of food all at once, which is commonly sold in the buckets by many survival companies. Another option is that each week when we go grocery shopping, we could buy an extra week's worth of canned food, so that each month, we would add a month to our food storage.

Also, we could buy No. 10 cans of wheat, rice, pasta, potato flakes, beans, etc. (I recommend the LDS Cannery for the No. 10 cans. Just do a Google search.) We could take the number of cans we need for our entire family and divide that by 12 and buy that specific number of cans each month.

Now that we have our options, we pick the one that looks to be the best. The final and most critical part of this step is to have someone else review the plan to look for pitfalls that you couldn't see. Once they check it out, you can incorporate their suggestions or not as you see fit.

The fifth step of this planning process is to implement your plan. For instance, if you picked buying the No. 10 cans and you figured out you needed 200 cans for your family, you would buy 17 cans each month. Or if money is not an issue, you could buy all the cans at once.

It's important to set a deadline for all of your goals. A good deadline for our example above would be to say that starting Jan. 1, 2016, you will buy 17 food storage cans a month and that by the end of 2016, you will have a year's supply of food for your family. (It will actually be a year and two weeks worth of food, since we started with two weeks, but it's better to have more than less.)

Make sure all the key players to the plan (the person that does the grocery shopping, for example) are aware of the plan and what their part is in making it happen.

The sixth and final step of this process is to evaluate your results. Remember what was your vision. Is the vision the same as the current

reality now? At the end of the year, if you don't have a year's supply of food, you would evaluate why not, decide what you need to change to reach your goal, and start the process again.

The good news is this six-step process can be used for all of our preparation goals. We all know that when we write it down on paper, there's a much better chance of accomplishing our goal and getting where we want to be. So use this six-step process to accomplish one of your goals today.

While it can be applied to anything in your life, it's also great to apply to your home safety goals and holds you accountable to getting your home in top order for the protection of your family.

Part 2: Night Defense

Stay Protected Even in Your Sleep

Lights for Home Defense

These days, it's so simple to make your home less appealing to a potential intruder.

Alarm systems are affordable, and there are DIY alarm systems you can install yourself if you don't want to go with a major company. The same goes with camera systems. You can get a wireless camera system and install it yourself. The only real knowledge you need is how to use a screwdriver and how to log on to a company's website to set everything up.

While I definitely recommend everyone have an alarm system and video cameras, one of the most overlooked security measures is having motion-sensor lights around your home. Maybe this is because motion-sensor lights aren't a "super sexy" topic, but it's critical that you don't have dark areas around your house where a criminal can hide as they try to break into your house through a door or window.

Even though you've got a front porch light and a back porch light, there are likely still areas around your home that don't receive any light and are pitch black. Most people focus their lights, locks, and security systems on the front of their homes, but the truth is that most home invasions occur somewhere else.

To discover where these "blind spots" are, take a walk around your

house when the sun goes down today. Identify these areas and then purchase a motion sensor light or two. Since these lights have no wires, you can install them in unconventional places such as on a tree, fence, or shed. It doesn't have to be attached to your house to light up your yard.

You can go to Home Depot and most hardware stores and get motion-sensor lights. I prefer a motion-sensor light that simply runs on batteries and is about as easy to install as it gets. All you need is a Phillips-head screwdriver and the ability to screw in three screws. With those tools and just a few minutes, you can install these motion-sensor lights all around your home.

My choice is the **Mr Beams 300-lumen spotlight**. If you go to Amazon.com and do a search for that phrase, it will be the first item that comes up on your screen.

As mentioned in the name of the product, this light puts out 300 lumens, which is bright enough to light up any lawn. The advertised coverage area of the light is 400 square feet, and I'd be willing to say it's a bit more.

The 300 lumens are powered by four D batteries, and the batteries seem to last forever. That's because whenever someone crosses in front of the light and sets off the motion sensor, the light stays on for only about 10 seconds, which prevents the batteries from getting drained too quickly.

The best part of this light, besides it doing exactly what it's supposed to, is the easy installation I mentioned earlier. You just install the four D batteries and then mount the light with the three screws to whatever location you wish.

By the way, these lights aren't too expensive. You can purchase three of them for \$80, which means they cost only about \$27 a piece. And depending on the size of your home and how many areas you need to cover, three of these lights may be all you need.

Solar Lights

If you want to avoid batteries altogether, you could get solar motion-sensor lights instead.

The solar light I like is made by a company called Swiftly Done. **Swiftly Done** makes motion-activated lights just like the Mr Beams that I described above. The Swiftly Done lights can provide up to 12 hours of light after a day's charge in the sun. But since they're motion activated, you obviously won't be using anywhere close to that amount of light each night.

What I really like about these solar motion-sensor lights is how easy they are to install and the number of unique places you can put them. There is the option of screwing them into place, but they also come with a sticky backing that you just peel off so you can quickly stick these lights anywhere you want.

And of course, since they're solar powered, you never have to worry about changing the batteries. If you don't have any battery or solar lights on your home, consider changing that today. But before you purchase lights, take a walk around your home at night and locate all of the "dark spots" so you know how many lights to buy and the places you need to put them.

Moving Undetected at Night

Most of us will never be trapped behind enemy lines and have to make our way to safety while eluding those who are searching for us. However, depending on what the future holds, there may come a time when you have to sneak out of your house at night to get food or water for your family while avoiding looters, gangs, or government thugs.

This is why I want to share with you some brief tips about moving undetected at night.

First, remember that you don't want anything on your body that jingles or makes noise. If you've got change in your pocket rattling around, get rid of it before you go out at night. Do not wear flip-flops (or any shoes) that have that "whooshing" sound every time you take a step.

Before you head out in the night, walk around your house to see if anything is making noise. Also, have a family member help you with this in case they notice a small noise that you missed.

Next, ensure that you don't have anything shiny or reflective on you. If you've got a shiny bald head, cover it up. If you wear a wedding ring,

watch, or other jewelry, remove these items before heading out. If you happen to wear glasses, put in contact lenses.

Also, don't forget about any items that glow, such as a cellphone or digital watch. If you always carry a gun, like I do, and you've got tritium night sights that glow, those can easily give you away. Hopefully, your gun is always concealed so you don't have to worry about that, but if you open carry, don't let your night sights give away your position.

Another critical thing to remember about night movement is to not let your smell draw attention to you. I'm sure you've been on an airplane or sat next to someone who it appeared took a bath in cologne. Do not go out at night wearing cologne, perfume, or even deodorant that gives off a heavy scent.

Don't forget to move slowly at night. If you do everything I've already mentioned above but you're moving too fast, you'll still draw attention to yourself.

Fast movement catches the eye of others and also causes you to make more mistakes. For instance, if you're moving too fast, you might not realize you just walked past a street lamp and your shadow was projected onto the side of a building that could be seen from a long distance.

Another reason to move slowly is so you don't disturb the area and leave a trace as to where you are going and what you are doing. For example, if you have to go get fresh water for your family at night, you don't want to break tree branches and smash down a ton of grass, making it obvious that someone has been there. If the "enemy" notices this, they may lie in wait for you the next time you go and retrieve fresh water. So disturb as little of the area you're going through as possible and you'll hardly leave a trace.

How to Protect Yourself at Night

It's no surprise that more people get attacked and more crimes occur during the night, because criminals try to use the darkness to their advantage. According to the Department of Justice, 63.2% of rapes and sexual assaults and 71.7% of motor vehicle thefts occur at night. And criminals who commit violent crimes at night are twice as likely to use a gun as they are during the day.

For this very reason, it's critical that you increase your situational awareness at night and that you don't take anything for granted.

For instance, I was born and raised in Fairfax County, Virginia. It's a suburb of Washington, D.C., and I'd like to think it's a rather safe place to live. But several years ago, there was a serial rapist in the area. He'd target women who were alone at night, out on a run or walking through a parking lot. One 29-year-old woman was sitting at a bus stop waiting for the bus to come when he attacked her, dragged her into the woods, and raped her.

And of course, it's not just women who are vulnerable. There are plenty of stories about men who are out alone at night and are "jumped" by a group of criminals who rob them of all their possessions.

To help keep you safer at night and to ensure none of the horrible acts I mentioned above ever happen to you, here are a few things I recommend.

First, wear clothing that will allow you to run. If you think someone is following you and they keep coming even after you warn them that you're on to them (which should deter most people), you need to be able to run. Obviously, stilettos and other similar types of shoes don't make it easy to flee quickly. So if you must head out alone at night (always try to go in a group), at least think about your attire and how easy it is to get around in.

Also, I highly recommend having a small tactical flashlight with you at night. There are plenty of companies that make these lights and some of the ones that I own are made by **SureFire**, **Fenix**, **Nextorch**, and **Olight**. These small lights are so powerful that you can blind someone who is pursuing you and give yourself a chance to escape.

I train a lot of college women, many of whom have jobs at the mall. I tell them to always try to leave in groups or have a security guard escort them to their car. But if they must go alone, they should have a flashlight in their left hand and a tactical pen in their right hand as they're walking through the parking lot.

If they see someone who makes them feel uncomfortable, they should "light them up" and run to a safe location. Don't hesitate. It's better to risk the "awkwardness" of shining a light on an innocent person than to be attacked by someone who you gave the benefit of the doubt.

You can also use a flashlight and an air horn. A few blasts on an air horn will scare the heck out of anyone following you and likely get them to flee quickly.

If you can and feel comfortable, I'd also recommend carrying a gun. Just be sure to use your flashlight as well, so that you can be 100% sure of a threat before using it.

Don't forget other important security measures such as not parking next to a panel van or not parking next to a row of bushes where someone could hide. Also, when walking around corners of a building, make sure to walk wide (instead of walking right along the building wall) so someone can't immediately grab you if they are hiding around the corner.

Remember to start thinking more at night. If you don't have a tactical flashlight along with a tactical pen or air horn or gun, make sure you get some of these items so you're better protected from now on. And if you have children, especially if they're in college, you'll definitely want to get them some of these items too.

Part 3: Personal Defense Fight Like a CIA Officer

Why Self-Confidence Could Save Your Life

It seems that some people are born with self-confidence, but I think most of us aren't. Most of us learn to develop self-confidence just like we learn any other skill.

Things like positive affirmations can help to build personal self-confidence, which is important, but today, I want to focus more on keeping yourself alive thanks to self-confidence.

You see, if you tell a brand-new shooter that they need to draw and fire a handgun in two seconds or less at a target 7 yards away, they'll probably think you're nuts. If they've never fired a handgun before, they probably won't believe that they can do it, and when they try, they'll most likely miss the target.

Since most self-defense shootings occur at distances of 7 yards or less, and they happen lightning fast, it's important to develop the skills and

confidence to protect oneself in this scenario.

What's the best way to do it? It's simple and it doesn't take much time at all. The first thing you want to do is practice 25 dry-fire trigger pulls on your handgun each day. This is simply practicing smooth trigger pulls with a safe and empty handgun. For example, in my office, I practice pulling the trigger on an empty gun. It helps to build muscle memory and ensure a smooth trigger pull if you do ever need to shoot. This will take you less than 15 minutes to do and will significantly increase your shooting ability.

You also want to get a timer to time yourself on how quickly you can draw your gun from the holster and get it on target. I use the **Pocket Pro II** timer, but any timer will do. You want to spend a few minutes each day drawing from the holster and getting it on target in two seconds or less.

After you've practiced for two weeks, it's time to head to your local shooting range. Bring your timer with you and do some live-fire drills. See if you can draw and fire in two seconds or less.

If you can't, don't worry about it. Just keep practicing daily until you're confident in your ability to draw and fire in the allotted time frame. What I don't often share with people is that when I first joined the agency, I wasn't a great shot. In the beginning when we would go through the shooting drills and training, I was often nervous that I wouldn't pass the qualification and that I would fail certain shooting portions.

I then started dry-firing and practicing my handgun skills. Soon after, my confidence in my shooting ability skyrocketed, and today, I know that I can draw and fire from concealment and hit a target in two seconds or less.

As I mentioned earlier, if you don't have this confidence level yet, it's no problem. It just means you haven't practiced enough.

That's the beauty of handgun shooting. There are few natural shooters. Most of the top shooters in the world have simply put in more training time than everyone else. Obviously, these top shooters do it full time, and most of us can't devote eight hours a day to training.

But if you're willing to devote 15 minutes a day, you will develop the confidence to know you can handle yourself if you ever find yourself

in a situation when you need to draw your gun to save your life.

How 2 Seconds Could Save Your Life

The first two–three seconds after someone attacks you are imperative.

There's only one thing you need to remember — do not hesitate.

Most attacks end poorly for the victim because it's our natural instinct to freeze up when we're caught off guard. It's easy to understand. We're terrified, our minds go blank, and in those split seconds of hesitation, we allow the attacker to take advantage of it.

Instead, the goal should be to train yourself well enough that you can take your attacker off guard. They are not expecting you to fight back or resist. Doing so will put them at a disadvantage.

I realize this is easier said than done. People die in home invasions, plane crashes, active shootings, and other incidents because they panic and freeze. This doesn't happen to everyone, but it does happen to many people.

If you are with family members who freeze, you need to grab them and move them along and try to quickly “snap” them out of their panic. If you happen to be in a closed-off room when a burglar enters and there is no escape, then you need to be ready to fight back. Most bedrooms only have one entrance and exit after all, so this is a situation you could very well find yourself in.

If you find yourself in an enclosed space with nowhere to go, you need to either rush the shooter or use your gun (or any other weapon you have on you at that time) to stop him. I realize this is not the natural reaction for the vast majority of people, but rushing and stopping the shooter will no doubt save your and your family's lives.

You should also be sure you're always prepared to defend yourself with at least a gun, a knife, or a tactical pen. Most likely, if someone has broken into your home, it will be an up-close and personal attack.

The bottom line is that each break-in is different. Remember to know ahead of time where the exits of your home and room are and what you plan to do. Don't hesitate if the time for action comes. And if you

find yourself in the unfortunate circumstance of being close to the person breaking in, do everything you can to stop them.

What to Do Once They're Inside (Home Invasion)

We've already covered how you can make your home as undesirable as possible to an intruder.

But I also want to cover what to do once an intruder is in your home.

The fact is no matter how good our security is, there's always the possibility of a home invasion. And if you react to a home invasion incorrectly, you or a family member could pay the ultimate price.

First, it should go without saying that you need to have some way to defend yourself if you hear your front door getting kicked in and people walking through your home.

My choice of weapon is a gun, which I believe is the best self-defense tool. That's why I keep a gun (in a rapid-access safe) on my nightstand. The current gun I have in the safe is a **SIG Sauer P226** with a Viridian flashlight/laser combination.

But because you should always have a backup, I have an additional firearm in case something happens to the first one. I also have three flashlights sitting on my nightstand just in case the first one I grab to open the safe doesn't work (even though I test them often).

If you or a family member doesn't like guns, then you need to choose something else, whether it's a knife, baseball bat, or golf club. However, you should be aware that choices like these require you to be very close to the intruder before you can use them, and that, obviously, puts you at risk. You also need to be prepared to react fast with whatever weapon you choose.

Many burglars who are interviewed in prison say that the first place they go during a burglary is to the master bedroom. This is because they know the bedroom is where people keep their jewelry, money, rare coins, and other valuables.

So if you hear your door getting kicked in at 3 a.m., the intruder is mostly likely headed right for you. This means you better get that

weapon out quickly, and you can't hesitate in using it. (Do dry runs to test your reaction time and make sure your weapon is easy to access in three seconds or less.)

But let's assume a worst-case home invasion scenario.

Let's say that somehow you are completely caught off guard by home intruders, they've got your family surrounded in the living room, and you're looking down the wrong end of a gun.

Human nature will tell you to comply with these intruders and do exactly what they say so that they will let you go unharmed.

This is what happened to the Petit family (the horrible Connecticut murders that took place several years ago). They were held for around 10 hours before the mother and two daughters were killed.

I realize that all of us want to be hopeful and want to believe the home intruder when they tells us they won't hurt us as long as we do everything they ask. But remember, a criminal is the one promising you this. After you've seen their face for hours, they're going to want to dispose of you rather than risk getting caught.

In the case of the Petit family murder, the criminals chose to set the house on fire to kill the family and leave less evidence.

In a home invasion, you do not want to sit there with the criminals and do nothing, taking their word that they are only going to ransack the house and then leave you be.

I don't care if they've got a gun on you or if they're carrying a machete. If you do nothing, the chances of you dying when they are done are extremely high. But if you fight back as soon as you can, you have the chance of saving your family's lives.

Please take some time to think about this. It's a mental decision you need to make now so that you don't question yourself or hesitate if you (heaven forbid) ever find yourself in this position.

You need to be aggressive. You need to fight back... You should not be an easy victim and let the criminals have their way with you, because it will probably cost you your life.

How Would You Handle These Four Intruders?

Every day, I scan the Internet looking for personal safety stories that I can learn from. After all, there's so much going on in this world that we can always learn something from a natural disaster, mall shooting, or a home invasion, to name a few.

When thinking about home invasions, some people probably believe it's going to be a lone intruder or maybe two people at most. But recently, a woman in Alabama had to defend herself against four people trying to bust their way into her home.

Earlier in the day, the four people knocked on the woman's door and asked to use her phone. The woman told the group no and refused to let them in.

This was obviously a smart move. It's never a good idea to open the door to a stranger, especially when there are four of them. It's also important to remember that a significant number of criminals case homes before they break into them. They'll pretend to be a vacuum cleaner salesman or to work for a pest control company.

Again, don't open the door to these guys, and let them know in a firm voice that you won't open the door. The last thing you want to do is sound weak or scared, because then the criminal will think you're going to be an easy victim.

Here's an easy way to tell right away if someone's lying about their intentions. If someone comes to your door, ask them a very direct question related to why they're claiming to be there. How long have you worked for the company? Could I speak to your manager? Something like that.

Truthful people will immediately respond, but if someone's lying, they're going to need to buy some time to think of a response. If the person starts stuttering, avoids eye contact, begins to act jittery, or isn't able to immediately respond with a cohesive story, they're lying. The first few seconds after you ask them a question should be enough time to gauge this behavior.

Unfortunately, the group of four wasn't deterred from the woman refusing to open the door. Later that evening, at around 9:30, they went back to the house. But this time, instead of knocking on the door, they began kicking the door down, and eventually forced their way inside the house.

The woman was armed with a gun and opened fire as the four came into the house. The first criminal was shot several times and ended up dying at the scene. The other three home invaders fled on foot and were eventually caught.

Thankfully, the woman wasn't injured. Thank goodness she had a gun and was prepared to use it.

After reading this woman's story, the important question we should all be asking ourselves is this: Would we survive if four people kicked their way into our home?

I've already explained that I keep a gun locked in a safe on my bed stand.

If four people bust through my door, I'm confident that I'd be prepared with my current setup. Plus, my wife also has her Glock 19, which holds 15 rounds plus one in the chamber.

Most likely, since criminals aren't too intelligent, they'll all come busting through the same door, making it easier to defend yourself. But what if you were dealing with highly sophisticated criminals who all entered through different doors?

Well, you could secure yourself in a bedroom, call police, and open fire only if they kick their way into the bedroom. However, if you've got kids or guests living in a basement, then it may not be possible to quickly get everyone into the same room.

In this case, you'd have to move and shoot and deal with each intruder as they presented themselves. This is why if you have a gun for home defense, it's critical to take firearms training, where you practice moving and shooting and dealing with multiple threats.

Also, if your spouse has a gun too, each of you could take a different exit, but you would obviously want to train together to make sure you don't accidentally shoot each other.

The bottom line is every home invasion is different, and it may be one person or five people who are high on drugs and willing to do whatever it takes to get valuables from your home.

So take a few minutes today and play the "what if" game. What if four people kicked their way inside your home at 9:30 p.m. tonight? Would you become a victim, or would you be able to defend yourself?

How to Safely Clear Your Home When You Think There's an Intruder

My lazy beagle Toby was barking as loudly as I'd never heard him before. Usually, I would have waited a minute or two to see if I heard any footsteps, strange noises, or a window breaking, but I didn't have time to spare. My mother, who had cancer, was bedridden on the couch on the main floor of our house, and I needed to get to her before a potential intruder did.

I cleared the house as quickly and safely as I could, and my mother was fine. I never found out what Toby was barking at that night, but I have no doubt he scared away a burglar.

Having my mother restricted to the main floor of the house made it necessary to leave my bedroom that night and make sure she was OK. However, if it's 3:00 a.m. and you hear a window break or you know someone is trying to enter your house, the last thing you want to do is leave your bedroom to go and confront the person. In the ideal world, you would get your family together into your designated safe room (such as your master bedroom) and wait there until the police arrived.

Of course, we don't live in an ideal world. Perhaps you're like I was and you have a family member living on the first floor or even in the basement. If this is the case, you have no choice but to leave your bedroom; therefore, it's necessary for you to know how to safely clear your house.

If you've ever seen the police clear a house, you know they always go in with a minimum of two people. But you and I likely won't have the choice to grab someone else at 3:00 a.m. to come help us, so here's how you properly clear a house by yourself, even though it's a dangerous situation you want to try to avoid at all costs.

First off, if you hear a noise in the middle of the night and you need to clear your house, you had better be able to take one or two steps from your bed and have access to your gun, which should be "cocked and locked." In other words, the gun should have a round in the chamber so all you have to do is pull the trigger to shoot. Right next to your gun should be your flashlight.

Many houses have enough ambient light for you to maneuver around without needing to have the flashlight on all of the time, so just use it

for target identification purposes so you don't accidentally shoot the wrong person.

Once you've got your gun and light, it's time to leave the bedroom. If you've got a traditional house, you'll likely end up entering a hallway. Stay close to the wall on the one side of the hallway and avoid walking down the middle, so you minimize your outline and make yourself less of a target.

As you slowly move down the hallway, you'll probably come across a bedroom or bathroom door. What should you do? If you've got a family member living in the basement and time is important, and you're pretty sure nobody made it upstairs, then just move on past the door. I know this isn't tactically correct, but we're talking about a real-life scenario here. If you've got your daughter sleeping in the basement, then no parent is going to take the time to clear every upstairs bedroom when they hear an intruder on the first floor or proceeding down the basement stairs.

However, if you don't have to rush downstairs, you'll certainly want to check the room ahead. Before you attempt to open the door (or any door in your house, for that matter), you need to pull the gun close to your body so the inside of your wrist is practically touching your rib cage. In other words, instead of having your arm fully extended, your elbow should be bent about 90 degrees. This position gives you more control over the firearm in case someone tries to reach for it. Another reason you bring the gun in close is so that you don't accidentally point the gun at your other hand while it's opening the door.

Assuming the door you've approached is on your right, you'll want to stand against the right side wall, with your gun close to your body, while reaching for the doorknob with your other hand. (Do not stand in the doorway. You should be reaching across while remaining against the wall.) If the door opens away from you, then turn the doorknob, give the door a solid push, and immediately take a step backward against the right-side wall again. If the door opens toward you, pull the door swiftly toward you and again take a step backward.

Once you've opened the door, it's time to "slice the pie." This is a method used to clear corners and doorway entrances by clearing each area in small slices. For instance, if you had just pushed your door open and stepped back, you would be standing against the right side

wall. From this position, you can't see into the entire room, and you certainly don't want to take a step into the doorway and fully expose yourself.

So you would begin to take small side steps in a semicircular motion. In other words, if you're on the right side of the door, you'll end up on the left side by going in a wide semicircle around the doorway entrance. Each time you take a side step, have your body lean slightly in the direction you're headed. That way, if an intruder is in the room, they will see the muzzle of your gun first, and the rest of your body won't be exposed.

Each time you take a step, give a brief pause so that you can scan as much of the room as possible and determine if that part of the room is clear. Once you end up on the left side of the door, you've done as much as you can to clear the room from the outside.

Now that it's time to enter the room, quickly step through the doorway and move to the opposite corner. For instance, if you're entering the doorway from the left side, move to the right corner and give a quick look over your shoulder to make sure nobody's hiding in the left corner. Don't forget to check all places an intruder could be hiding, such as under a bed, in a closet, under a desk, or under any other large object.

Once you're satisfied the room is clear, it's time to continue moving through your house. The next obstacle you'll run into is the stairs. But before you just stand at the top of the stairs and make yourself an easy target, you'll want to slice the pie just as you did with the doorway so you can make sure nobody is waiting at the bottom of the stairs to attack you. Again, start on one side of the wall and take small steps in a semicircle so you can see a little bit more of the stairs each time.

Once you do a full scan of the stairs, make your way down while at the same time scanning everything you can see. The stairs are a nightmare, because you've likely got a room entrance at the bottom of the stairs to your left and a large hallway to your right with a number of openings too.

Since there is no way to see into the room on the left while going down the stairs, try to scan as much of the hallway to your right as possible. Once you get to the bottom, slice the pie for the room on your left while constantly glancing over your shoulder to see if anyone is approaching on your right.

You'll clear the rest of your main floor just as you cleared your top

floor when first leaving your bedroom. Every time you come to a corner or a door, you'll want to slice the pie so you'll hopefully see the bad guy before he sees you. If you have a basement, you'll systematically clear it the same way too. Also, remember to have patience throughout this entire process. Each time you take a semicircular step around a corner or doorway entrance, pause and scan the area from the floor to the ceiling.

Perhaps most importantly, since clearing a house is such a dangerous activity, you need to practice it as often as you can. For example, last month I got back from a 10-day vacation in Utah. I knew my house was secure and no alarms had gone off. However, when I got back to my house from the airport, I didn't just rush in and plop myself down on the couch.

Instead, I opened my front door and took a step back and sliced the pie. Next, I cleared my entire house to make sure it was empty. Not only is this good practice, but I had been gone for 10 days, so it's always possible someone could have been hiding in my house.

Another good activity is to practice clearing the house with your spouse or kids. Tell them to go hide somewhere and play a fun game of hide-and-seek. When you're searching for them, you'll want to pay attention to see if they see you first or you see them first. Also, if you're slicing the pie, have them point out the moment they see you or what body part they see first. This will help determine if you're doing it correctly — the muzzle of the gun is the first thing they should see, not your legs. Obviously, if you do play this game, don't go around with a real gun. Use your finger or a plastic training gun instead.

Again, I can't emphasize enough that clearing a house by yourself is the last thing you want to do. If you still don't believe me, and you're the macho type with a huge ego, then play the hide-and-seek game I mentioned above. After your spouse has surprised and "killed" you for the 10th time, you'll fully realize that if possible, waiting in your safe room while the police clear the house is the much smarter option.

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