

## **What's done in the dark will be brought to light.**

By Daniel Cahill

Many of us in the industry spend thousands of dollars to outfit ourselves with the most cutting edge firearms, knives, and other self defense accessories. While this may be a good start we tend to neglect one of the most crucial tools we could carry, a flashlight. All of the equipment in the world won't help you if you cannot see the threat, but this article is not about using a flashlight as a supplement for another weapon, but instead as a weapon itself. Keep in mind this article is strictly my opinion that I have formed from years of training in the industry. To start us off lets discuss *why and how a flashlight can be used as a weapon.*

For anyone who has ever looked up into the sky on a sunny day, they can attest to the fact that light can limit vision. In the same way you cannot look directly into the sun, you can't look directly into a bright flashlight. The human eye is an incredible feat of engineering, something that we will only touch on lightly in this article. The basic structure of the eye that controls the intake of light is the pupil. In dark environments the pupils dilate (open) to allow more light in, while in bright light they contract. This entire process happens so seamlessly that most people don't give it a second thought. Now that the biology lesson is out of the way let's talk about how to exploit this mechanism for defensive purposes. A bright flashlight allows a rapid transition in light that the human eye cannot keep up with. This means that to avoid damage to the eye, our bodies will reflexively shut our eyes or turn away. This reflex is not something that can be controlled, so *this reaction is universal among humans.* Knowing this allows a better understanding about the use of flashlights in a self defense scenario. We can use our lights to stun, disorient, and to generally get a better understanding of the situation, all whilst

buying you time to make the call on how much force is needed to stop the threat, or even retreat if possible. Many modern tactical flashlights will also have what is called a striking bezel, which generally consist of a multi pointed ring around the lens itself. This can be used to strike, gouge, or pry at an attacker if the distance allows.

## Pros and Cons

Next we will discuss some of the pros and cons of using a light as a defensive tool.

While I am a huge supporter of using lights, I am going to play devil's advocate and discuss it from all sides.

The pros include #1 ***There is no required age to carry a flashlight for defense***, many of those who cannot yet carry a firearm would benefit greatly from carrying a flashlight. #2 ***The stakes are much lower legally for pulling a flashlight, than they would be for pulling a gun, knife, or any other weapon.*** I always recommend drawing a light first to assess the situation if possible. Even in a worst case scenario of using a light, everyone goes home alive. #3 ***Flashlights are easy to use.*** Much like using a water hose you just point the stream of light at the target. This instant feedback allows us to easily track moving targets just as easily as pointing our finger. #4 ***They are inconspicuous.*** Unlike carrying a cumbersome firearm, many tactical lights are no larger than a sharpie marker. Plus you will not encounter the negative reaction from the populous that you may have if you are spotted with a firearm. #5 My last pro we will talk about here is the ***utilitarian aspect of the flashlight.*** We all at some point have needed a light, from walking through a dark parking lot, to searching inside your purse. Lights

have a multitude of uses besides self defense, which puts them higher on my list of EDC items than even my firearm.

The list of cons is much shorter, but they still have some drawbacks. #1 ***The initial cost.*** Keep in mind that a high quality flashlight is going to cost you. Brands like Surefire, Streamlight, Inforce, and 4 sevens will generally cost in-between \$50 and \$200, but just like anything you will be trusting your life to, it is worth the investment. #2 ***Batteries, batteries, batteries.*** If you carry a light for defense you must always have the batteries within reach. Many of today's high output batteries use quite a bit of energy to power, and this generally leads to a shorter lifespan for the batteries. This may range from 3 hours at full power, to 30 minutes at full power. While 3 hours seems like an eternity, if you use your light for utilitarian purposes at all it adds up fast. Just be prepared to have batteries stashed in the car, at home, at the office, and everywhere in between. #3 ***Light is not always the best weapon.*** Keep in mind that while flashlights are an invaluable tool, they *don't incapacitate* the crook. The reflexive action we talked about earlier is primarily due to the *Rapid adjustment to the light*, meaning it may only last a few seconds. This may give you the time to escape, and it may not. Always be prepared to raise the level of violence if needed.

In summary, I can't imagine my day without my flashlight. It is an essential tool that I have come to rely on. While it may not be the only tool in my every day carry, it is one of my favorites. Let us know what you think about the article on our Facebook page. And as always if you have any question about lights and their use as a weapon, feel free to contact us at Eagle Gun Range. Hopefully this article shed some light on the subject (pun intended).