

Women & FIREARMS

Not Just A Boys' Club





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Politicians, anti-gun activists, and the media have told us for decades that women and guns don't mix. In fact, over the last two or three generations, self-defense and firearms have been demonized. Women were told they can't take care of themselves. And these groups have done everything in their power to convince others that when women use guns, they are actually just putting themselves and others around them in danger.

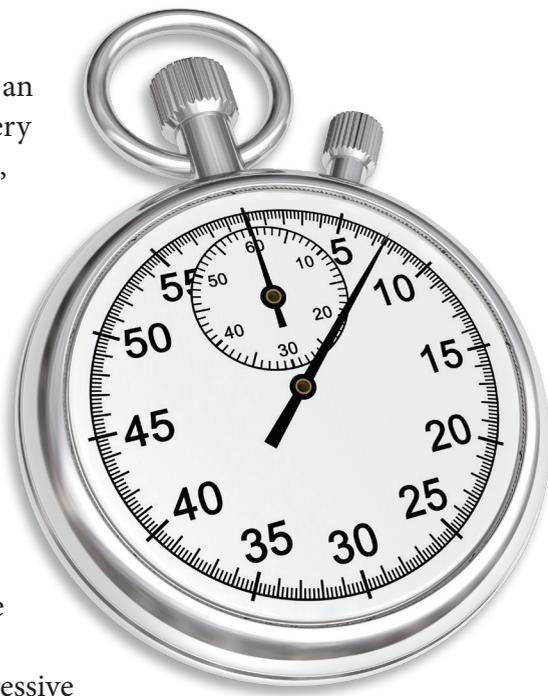
But telling a woman NOT to learn how to use a firearm could be far more detrimental than beneficial. Not understanding this tool of protection can be frightening and limiting. And since waiting for help, defenseless and vulnerable, is a terrible option, there is no better way to secure one's personal safety than by owning a gun...and by knowing how to use it safely and proficiently.

Think about it. What if it were your daughter whose life was being threatened? Or your sister? Or your mother? Would you want them to wait and pray for help to come, or would you want them to have the means to fight back and protect themselves? No matter who you are or how you look at it, we all have to come to terms with the fact that women are still the more victimized gender. According to the National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

one out of every six American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime. This means that every 107 seconds, a female in the U.S. is sexually assaulted. As well, statistics show that every 9 seconds in the U.S., a woman is attacked or beaten.

Every day (for women, especially), there is a constant struggle with disparity of force, or with “the situation that any reasonable person would conclude places you at an overwhelming disadvantage in your effort to protect yourself against immediate and serious bodily injury.” I, for one, am not OK with this. And as a woman, I want to be as prepared and as safe as I possibly can be. That’s one reason I have a gun and why I train and learn everything I can about how to use a firearm for self-defense. Because when push comes to shove, the only one who can protect you is you.

Let’s face it: Guys are often bigger, stronger, and more aggressive than ladies. They’re just made that way. That gives them the upper hand—and more often than not, they know it. So they look for “smaller, weaker prey.” They look for the “easy targets.” And while I know that physically I may be weaker than an attacker, I also recognize that in these situations, a firearm can truly be an equalizer. And isn’t that what so many people are fighting for when it comes to women—equality?



“WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE, THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN PROTECT YOU IS YOU.”



Unfortunately, many organizations are doing the opposite when they stand up for gun control rather than gun rights. And derisive comments against women have been popping up all over the place. Last year, Everytown for Gun Safety, a Michael Bloomberg-funded arm of the gun control lobby, shared several tweets suggesting that young women shouldn't handle firearms. One tweet read: "You think your drunk college-age daughters are bad with their phones? Imagine them with guns."

Women's magazines like Cosmopolitan have produced articles and videos highlighting (and perhaps even celebrating) women who are terrified of firearms. According to a recent video series they created about dating a man with a gun, many women seem to believe that guns are "scary death machines." And if a woman is in a relationship with a gun-owning man, then the relationship is destined to fail since all men who own guns are apparently domestic abusers. In addition, according to the videos, it seems that the Second Amendment is just an old, pointless, archaic sentiment, worthy of nothing more than an eye roll.

Instead of supporting women and showing women as strong, empowered, and capable of taking care of themselves, these groups are making women look like nothing more than whimpering cowards who are irrational, emasculating, and helpless.

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WHAT KIND OF WOMAN BUYS A GUN?

The idea that women should not own guns is not a new line of thinking. And, unfortunately, you can find it just about anywhere. Not too long ago, I got involved in a conversation (if you can even call it that) about gun control. One of the participants in this verbal exchange, a guy who is vehemently against guns in the hands of anyone, was trying to break me down and insult me. After exhausting all the pointless arguments he could come up with, he exasperatedly threw this rhetorical question at me: “What kind of woman buys a gun, anyway?”

I suppose, in his mind, he wanted me to be shocked and appalled by the statement. I suppose, in his imaginary world, the only women who purchase guns are vile, unruly she-devils or unrefined, power-hungry boneheads.

His question didn't faze or offend me because I know exactly the kind of woman who purchases a gun. I am one. And I am definitely

not alone. Gun sales and gun ownership are on the rise for women, especially, and for all ages, as well. A recent ABC News poll found that among the issues millennial women care about most, gun rights were just as important to them as equal pay.

You want to know what kind of woman buys firearms? It's the young graduate who just started her first real job in a new city, 1,200 miles from home. It's the retired businesswoman who wants to take up a new hobby that also offers the added benefit of self-protection. It's the wife who enjoys going to the range to shoot recreationally with her husband. It's the single mom who's been physically threatened before and who wants nothing but a better—and safer—life for her and her two children. It's the family matriarch who acknowledges that evil exists in this world and that people need to be aware of themselves and their surroundings.

“I KNOW EXACTLY THE KIND OF WOMAN WHO PURCHASES A GUN. I AM ONE. AND I AM DEFINITELY NOT ALONE.”



I'll tell you about the women who buy guns. They are students, writers, homemakers, doctors, engineers, law enforcement officers, and administrators. They are innovators, visionaries, heroes, and survivors. What's more, the women who buy guns are strong, weak, old, and young. They are experienced, novice, outspoken, soft-spoken, able-bodied, and wheelchair-bound.

The women who buy guns are bold. They are determined. They are responsible. They are wise. They are wallflowers. And they are wildflowers. And they are willing to learn. Not only that, the kind of woman who buys a gun realizes that it's not enough that she alone understands how to safely and effectively use this tool for protection. She knows that it's important to train her family members. She also tells her friends. She helps her community. She spreads

the word about our Second Amendment right, and she lives a responsibly armed lifestyle.

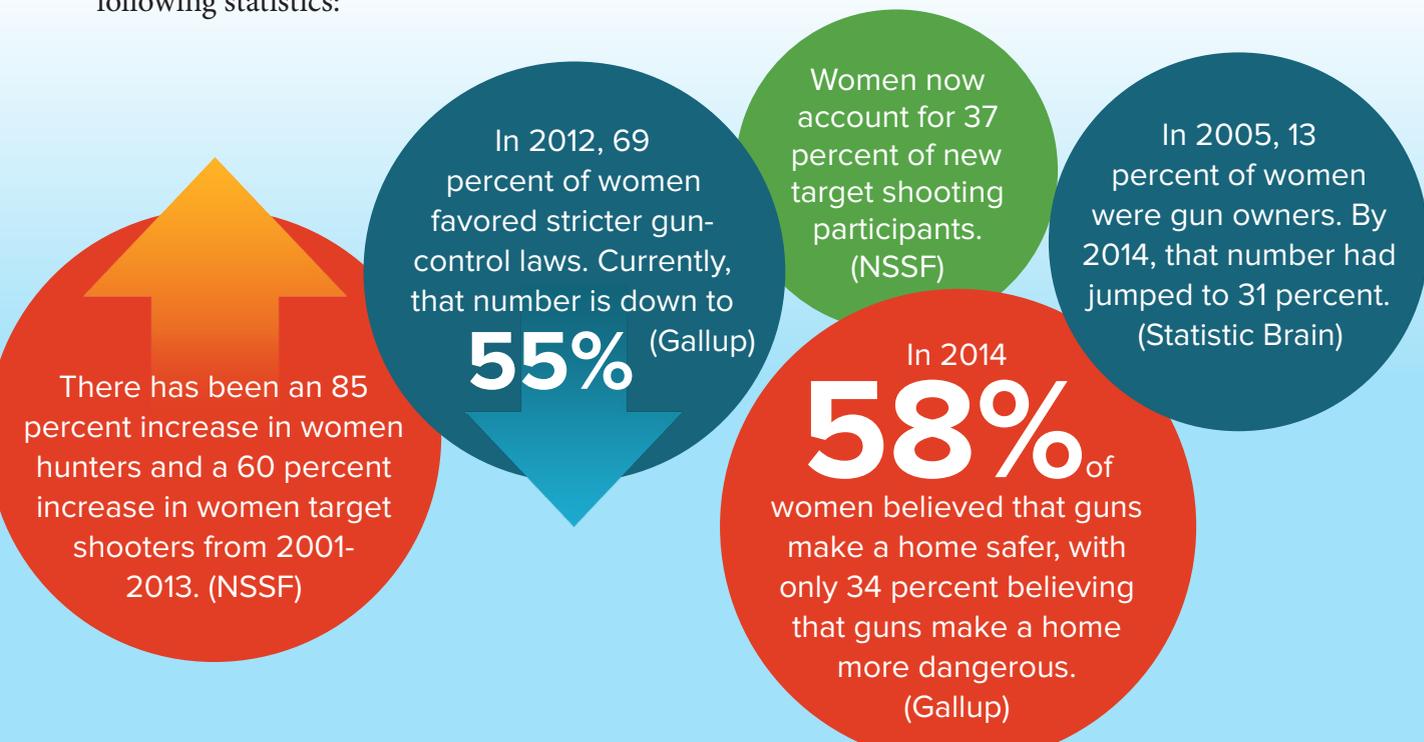
That woman is your friend. Your mother. Your sister. Your daughter. That woman is you. And she is me.

I'm proud to be the kind of woman who buys a gun. Not everyone will understand that, and that's OK. Perhaps my actions will speak louder than my words. Perhaps people who know me, watch me, interact with me, or pass me by will see it for themselves.

Not everyone will like the idea, either. They may secretly hope that, somehow, women will be left in the dark, unsure, unaware, anxious, and overcome. And they may never truly understand that the kind of woman who purchases a gun is the kind of woman who can be a role model and a positive influence, a woman who can make a difference...and who can save lives.

WHAT DO THE STATISTICS SHOW?

Not too long ago, I came across an article titled: "Why The Gun Industry Will Never Win Over American Women." The author praises Shannon Watts of Moms Demand Action, talks about domestic violence being a major reason NOT to have a firearm, and insists that women are not safer with guns. She claims that folks in the NRA (and anyone, really, who supports lawful and responsible gun ownership) are just using "intimidation tactics" and spouting off "faux-feminist rhetoric," stating that gun lobbyists are "invoking the threat of potential violence in the name of female empowerment." But I still had to laugh at the article—and at that headline—considering the following statistics:



In 8 states that keep data by gender, the number of concealed carry permits has increased by **161%** for women since 2012. (Crime Prevention Research Center)



In 2012, 80 percent of gun retailers reported a rise in female customers. (CNN)

In 2003, 36 percent of women reported having guns in the home; that number is currently up to around **42%** (Gallup)

It may be a bitter pill for the media and the gun-grabbers to swallow, but they have already lost the battle. The gun industry HAS won over American women! Like it or not, females are continuing to break the shooting industry's traditional, "boy's club" mold. And scores of American women are purchasing, training with, and carrying firearms in the name of female empowerment because we refuse to stand by, idle and helpless, and become victims—or allow harm to come to our families or to our children.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN WOMEN LEARN HOW TO USE GUNS?

Clearly, there are misconceptions about women and guns. So do you want to know the truth of the matter? Want to know what REALLY happens when women learn how to use guns?

● THEY FEEL EMPOWERED.

We've all been taught that knowledge is power, and the same goes for the understanding of firearms. The initial fear and inferiority that comes with unfamiliarity and inexperience will be fast replaced with a newfound confidence and control. And a woman with a working knowledge and understanding of firearms will feel an awesome new sense of empowerment that comes along with the awesome responsibility.

● THEY ARE ABLE TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES.

That's right! Instead of relying on or waiting for others to do it for them, women can take action—or take aim—for themselves and make a difference in their lives and in the lives of others. They no longer have to feel powerless or helpless, depending on someone else to take care of them. With firearms training, they have an additional tool for protection, an "equalizer," if ever they have to face a violent encounter.

● **THEY SLEEP BETTER.**

Women who learn how to defend themselves have more peace of mind. They know that they have training...and options. They will also ease the minds of those who care about them but can't protect them, be with them, or keep an eye on them 24/7.

● **THEY MAY GET GOOD AT SHOOTING.**

Women often surprise themselves by how well they shoot and how much they enjoy it. So don't be surprised if they get excited to train... and train often! Who knows? They may be so successful at punching holes in paper and knocking down steel that they try their hand at competitive shooting. As well, they may change up their typical girls'-night-out routine to a girls' night in—at the range!

● **THEY PURCHASE AND CARRY THEIR OWN GUNS.**

Firearms are not a guys' thing. They're an American thing. And women who learn how to shoot will be just as interested in selecting their own handguns, holsters, and accessories so they can train with and carry their firearms. Oh...and there are plenty of items out there that women will love, whether made by women, made with women in mind, or made with a little added flare or function. With their new love, respect, and appreciation for the firearms industry, the traditional window shopping, "wish list," or impromptu shopping spree may all rise to a whole new level!



● **THEY ENCOURAGE OTHER WOMEN TO SHOOT.**

Women are experts at getting other women involved in activities they can all do together. And what better past time to share than the right to keep and bear arms? It's not unusual for a well-armed woman to suddenly have a well-armed mom, a well-armed sister, a well-armed daughter, and a crew of well-armed friends. The enthusiasm is contagious, and she won't be able to hide her passion for self-defense and personal protection. Along with this, there are many groups and organizations focused on firearms and training—just for women. It's basically a new kind of support or activity group that has the benefit of life-changing—and life-saving—knowledge and skills.

- **THEY EXERCISE A CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT.**

The Second Amendment states that, “A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.” And men and women alike should be proud and honored to support, defend, and exercise that right!

- **THEY CHANGE THE STEREOTYPE.**

As more and more women get involved with firearms ownership and training, the stereotype will continue to change. It won't be unusual or out of the ordinary for females to conceal carry. It won't be objectionable for a lady to protect herself. It won't be upsetting for a woman to take firearms classes—or to teach them. As more women learn how to use guns, the growth and involvement will become more commonplace and more accepted. And we'll continue to break the “boys' club” mold!

- **THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

According to the NSSF, “A swell in the ranks of women gun owners has enormous implications for the industry both economically and politically. Clearly, women can sway public policy, and their needs, wants and desires for additional firearms, equipment and services will significantly impact the industry's future as a whole.” Women can also impact our country. And those who know how to use guns and who understand how important personal protection is will stand up for their rights, will vote like-minded individuals into office, and will demand to be heard and supported. These women will also be positive voices and role models within their own homes, their families, and their communities. They will stand firm. They will stay strong. And they will be heard.



“WE’LL CONTINUE TO BREAK THE “BOYS’ CLUB” MOLD.”



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