

GUN LASERS



By Michael Ware

The CCA guys in the shop and I cruise Internet forums routinely. It is important we help customers face to face as well as those out in cyber space. It isn't uncommon to see questions about accessories as often as questions about the weapons themselves, especially when it comes to hand guns. Should I use a laser? Which weapon light should I choose? Do these sights make my butt look fat? Well, we don't get a lot of sight/rump questions actually, but I wanted to make sure you were paying attention.

Lasers are interesting accessories. There are lots of thoughts on lasers, how they are to be used, and under what circumstances. An accessory like a laser is a very personal choice confined to how you'll utilize your firearm the majority of the time. I hold lasers, as a general rule, in very average regard. I view them in most cases as 'training wheels' like those on my daughter's bicycle. They are meant to help a fledgling shooter and just like a tiny bike, they should be removed at some point.

There are a ton of cheap lasers out there, but they usually don't attach to your firearm all that well, don't hold a zero well, and are generally poor equipment. This pushes us into dedicated lasers of higher cost. It is hard for me to recommend a \$100.00+ laser knowing it should be removed after very little practice. Granted, there are exceptions to every rule, but I'd much rather see a shooter spend their money on a range training course and/or practice ammo. Also consider that a laser tends to not only show anyone who can see the dot itself where you are aiming, but it also draws a direct line back to your position.

I view weapon-mounted lights as a more practical accessory when properly chosen. Again, there are no absolutes involved here, so a separate handheld light is a great thing to use, but for this discussion let's stick to weapon mounted lights. Most lights mount to the picatinny rail located ahead of your weapon's trigger guard and some mount to the guard itself. Lots of quality lights exist, but we need to be specific about how we intend to use them.

If you're going to employ this light on a weapon you keep in your vehicle, then high output is a great specification for you to consider. It is likely you'll be outside when

you use it, thus a really bright light may be just the ticket. However, the opposite can be true if used on a weapon primarily suited for home defense. Like always, imagine the circumstances you'll use the light, and think through what will happen. Visualize being woken at 3AM, you're groggy, not terribly astute, and your night vision is poor as your eyes are still adjusting. You grab your trusty weapon, and move slowly out of the bedroom and head down your hallway. You pop your light on in that brightly painted hallway and, BAM, you have instantly zapped the little acclimation to the darkness you had. Why? Your home is painted with light colors, which is the case in 90% of homes, and the reflection of the light was bright. This situation begs for either a lower output light, or the use of a diffuser to lessen the light output and spread it unlike the typical 'spot' type lights.

Many light and laser combos exist in the marketplace and can provide for a great option. The units I've seen and used that are suitable for genuine reliability are a bit expensive, but if you really feel you need that type of option, that product does exist and can work well for you. Always keep in mind that the single largest downside to a weapon mounted light is really simple – you're pointing a weapon at everything you are trying to illuminate. This thought bothers me very little if some dirt bag is in my home. It is a far different consideration if you run across your kid raiding the

refrigerator. Give that some thought, as there are pros and cons to each decision.

Night sights, fiber optics, three dot sights, black posts, etc. are all options we see in common use. Like every option, each has a pro and a con you should consider. Costing structure aside, I have a soft spot for the front site. I don't have any problem spending a little extra dough on a large front night sight. Yes, rear sights are necessary, but for quick point shooting, attaining your front site clearly and quickly is paramount to good shooting. Fiber optics are bright in daylight and work extremely well, but they don't do jack after dark. Night sights with white or bright colored surrounds are popular and do a great job day or night. It is becoming popular for the rear sight groove to be wide and deep you can see a bit of 'daylight' between the sights and this tends to make you a bit more accurate side to side. Sight configurations are many, so there is a lot to choose from.

Your best option is to handle some weapons with these various accessories and see what you think may work. Don't be afraid to ask to take the weapon into the bathroom or closet with your sales person so you can actually see how these lights, sights, and lasers work. Be diligent and thorough and you'll make some good decisions. ... And tell your kid if he has the munchies to turn the kitchen light on next time he empties out the icebox at 3AM. 🍌🍌



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