



How to Spot a Concealed Weapon
Characteristics of the Armed Individual

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OBSERVATION

When placing a subject under observation for the purpose of trying to determine whether or not that person is possibly armed, what is the first crucial trait that you as a Law Enforcement Officer should try to determine about that individual??

- **DETERMINE THEIR STRONG SIDE** - Look for possible indicators such as Rings, Wristwatches, Writing, Smoking, Lighting Cigarettes, Holding/Moving Objects, etc. to help determine a favored side.

An individual who carries a gun on their person will periodically touch that gun both consciously and unconsciously.

- ***This is called a Security Feel.***

LOOK FOR:

- Touching
- Feeling
- Adjustments
- Stiffer Arm

88% of the people in the U.S. are right handed. The majority of those right-handed people that carry handguns illegally carry them in the right front waist band, loose.

- WHY?
- They see it in the movies.
- It's the "cool" thing to do.
- That is where it is the most secure and accessible

Body Movements - conscious & unconscious (reasons/adjustments for touching, security feels, physical property of gun, when, why, how).

- Cause for slippage of weapon and when
- Stiffer arm on gun side
- Holding
- Bending
- Macho feeling
- Running (from crime, rain, traffic, bus, subways, cab, etc.)
- Leaning
- Sitting

- Reaching
- Crouching
- Turning from view for adjustment
- Pulling pants up, down
- Pulling clothing down
- Shorter arm & leg swing on gun side
- Protective turning of armed side
- Arm over center of body, etc.
- Turn and hold in crowds
- Looking down at gun
- Arm or part of arm holding snug
- Security hold with elbow on gun
- Getting in/out of vehicles

While walking or running (especially in the rain), you will notice a short or stiff arm swing and short leg stride. What are their actions when walking by person/persons, and streets/doorways, etc?

Vehicle Stops

- Look for a rising shoulder, or moving up to grab the weapon from the waistband.
- Bending over or shoulder dip to hide the weapon under a seat.

Clothing & Actions - what features stand out, attract your attention, and arouse your suspicion.

- Clothing: Does the clothing fit the season?
- Does the clothing match?
- Is the clothing loose, or baggy?
- In cold weather, is the individuals coat unzipped or unbuttoned?
- Look for the individual wearing only one glove.
- When concealed in a jacket pocket, hood, or bag, gravity pulls that weight down - **Firearms have WEIGHT**
- Look for uneven dip in clothing or bags.
- Tailored in/worn out, do they even fit the build of the subject
- Does shoes/boots match clothing or weather conditions
- Does work outfits match conditions
- Pants, belts (no belt loops, but is wearing belt)
- Ponchos (wide arms, etc.)
- Chains, straps, hats, etc.
- Socks (use elastic as ankle holster)
- Pockets
- Hoods and drawstrings

- Color combinations
- Gloves (one hand gloved, the other in their pocket)
- Outer garments (Are jacket, pants, shoes coordinated for dress/work/leisure?)**

BULGES and certain body movements observed to discover the smallest/best concealed un-holstered weapons.

Different ways guns are carried, and where they are possessed

- Waistband** (Front side, crook of back, etc.)
- Pants (Pockets, cuffs, etc.)
- Pockets (Pants, jackets, coats, etc.)
- Hats (Including hoods of sweatshirts, jackets, etc.)
- Underwear (Protective cups, etc.)
- Shoes and boots
- Bags (Hand, backpacks, pouches, shoulder)
- Radios, cameras, video recorders (all sizes)
- Grocery bags, boxes, shopping bags, etc.
- Hollow books, newspapers, cigarette packs & boxes
- Holsters (Bought, made, stolen-All types)
- Bikes & Motorcycles
- Vehicles

Confrontation tactics and apprehension

- Picking location - time, circumstances permit; where, why
- Single, multiple person stops
- Approach techniques
- Cover
- Prior knowledge of person you are approaching
- Firearm usage/ restraint/shooting tactics
- Pursuit of armed felons (auto/foot)
- Searches
- Surveillance of person/persons
- Vehicle stops and searches
- Conversation techniques with the person/persons during approach, search, questioning, and possibly processing
- Resistance by person/persons
- THINK about when you wear your gun off duty, and your actions (they are very similar).

Edged Weapons Types

REMEMBER - ALL knives are lethal

Three broad categories

1. Fixed Blade

- Thrusting weapons
- Slashing Weapons
- Combination

2. Folding Blade

- Thrusting weapons
- Slashing Weapons
- Combination

3. Disguised Weapons

- Any of the above

Palming - The act of concealing a weapon (usually an edged blade) or contraband in the palm of your hand covertly

1. Fixed Blades Weapons

- One solid piece
- Better penetration
- More difficult to conceal
- Often worn openly on the belt
- Neck knives
- Boot knives
- Wrist rigs
- Look for bulges, often a “point” at the tip of the handle
- Security feel
- **Palming**

2. Folding Blade Weapons

- Easily concealed

- Inexpensive / easily obtained
- No felony prohibition / parole violation
- Legal depending on blade length
- Easy to explain
- Often worn on strong side
- Usually has belt clip exposed
- Most commonly carried in the right front pocket or waistband
- Security feel when nervous
- Can be carried virtually anywhere on the person
- **Palming**

3. Disguised Edged Weapons

- Easily obtained
- Easily concealed
- Difficult to detect
- Designed to look like a common object
- Can be carried anywhere that object is normally carried

Most common are:

- Pen Knife
- Lipstick knife
- Belt Buckle Knife
- Lighter Knife
- Hair brush knife