

42 Why I Carry Cross Draw

By R.D. VanOrsdale Captain, USA, Ret. (dsbl)

First, let me provide some background. I am an old-school guy. Ninety percent of the time, my carry gun is a J-Frame Smith & Wesson loaded with .38 Special (+P) 125-grain hollow points.

Second, I am not a novice in the area of carrying a concealed handgun or putting a concealed handgun into effect. My first civilian concealed carry

permit was issued to me in July 1975.

During the 35 years since, I have carried by just about all the modes there are: shoulder holster, ankle holster, pocket holster, fanny pack, strong-side holster, small-of-the-back holster, in-the-waistband holster, belly-band holster, and cross-draw holster. In fact, when *in multi* years ago, I even carried a very small piece in a holster that fit on my forearm. (Now, THAT could generate some very interesting and intriguing stories!)

With all that history and varied experience, except for those times when requirements dictate otherwise, I have settled on carrying cross draw, for a number of reasons.

First, I do not like it when I am driving and a piece riding in a strong-side or small-of-the-back holster digs into my side or back. It is just too uncomfortable. Moreover, it would be extremely awkward and relatively painful for my repaired strong-side shoulder if I ever had to draw the piece from the holster while seated in my car seat. Yes, I realize that law enforcement often requires officers to carry strong side; however, I am addressing civilian concealed carry options, not the duty requirements of the police.



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Second, when my wife and I are out shopping, running errands, taking a walk, or are together outside the house, I usually wear a jacket and she often has her arm in mine, on my strong side, with me carrying something in my off hand. During those times, resting my strong hand in the gap between my stomach and my belt buckle places my hand scant inches away from the butt of my revolver.

Third, if I am being followed by any potential miscreants, and feel the need to prepare to draw, I can casually grasp my revolver, unsnap the safety strap, and be prepared to fully draw the handgun, all without telegraphing my actions to anybody around me, especially the potential bad guys behind me. If I must draw the piece and engage to the rear, all I have to do is turn a mere 90 degrees to my weak side and shoot through my jacket. Such can be accomplished in tenths of a second, and as my history proves, can surprise even the baddest of the bad.

Fourth, if the potential threat is to my front, I can turn the 90 degrees to my strong side and accomplish the engagement just as quickly as mentioned above. This 90-degree turn also accomplishes the point of presenting a narrower target profile to the threat. (Thank goodness I am not as far out in front as I am wide in the chest!)

Some will argue that hot weather, shorts and T-shirt dress, and other situational issues are better addressed by different carry methods.

That is true. But, what works for me MOST OF THE TIME is cross draw.

