

## Progressive FORCE Concepts

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### 'Top Ten' Holster Selection Factors Checklist

Many times I have said to myself, "This is it, this is the last holster I'll ever buy..." And then two months later I already have a new one on order. Evolution and innovation do not sleep, and as such, there's no way to progressively carry a weapon for work or defense and not own more than one holster. This list is designed to serve as a guide to keep you from making mistakes when selecting your next holster.

#### I. Carrying or Fighting?

There is an abundance of holsters out there whose principle function is the 'carry' or transportation of a weapon, and not fighting with it or bringing it to bear dynamically. Shoulder and ankle holsters being two of the greatest offenders in this category.

#### II. Fit

Just like shoes, there is no such thing as small, medium or large when it comes to holsters. The system you choose must be purpose-built for your weapon. Excess slop or overtight tolerances can have disastrous effects. If the holster is made for your weapon *and* a weapon-mounted light, you should NOT run the holster without that light. How thick and wide is the belt you plan on using? Are your belt loops or the paddle of your holster sized to fit that belt? Are you skinny, fat, tall or short? The holster is truly a weapon-body interface and must accurately and comfortably fit the user. A painful system will typically wind up being worn or used in a modified or unintended manner; compromising safety and performance.

#### III. Safety

It is amazing, but some of the most unsafe holster systems remain quite popular. One in particular is so poorly-designed that we have seen it *lockup*, precluding presentation, contribute to negligent discharges and even breaking under normal use. When the gear that is supposed to help you can hurt you, something needs to change and quickly.

#### IV. Compatibility

Whether you are a civilian exercising Every Day Carry (EDC), a uniformed officer, plainclothes detective, protective agent or direct-action assaulter, there is a holster to fit your needs. Ensure that your selected holster works with (and not against) your existing gear, clothes and mission.

## **V. Multi-Dimensional**

Sitting for long periods inside of cramped vehicles can cause some holsters to dig into certain places. In an effort to ease discomfort, some people will choose to compromise their safety and combative effectiveness in order to satisfy one-dimensional situations. Beware of developing tunnel vision concerning such narrow parameters.

## **VI. Durability**

Holsters must be strong, over-engineered and capable of withstanding abuse. Holsters which come loose or break during normal operation are a red flag that you may arrive at the objective unarmed. Understand also that different materials will perform differently. Nylon does not stretch like leather, yet leather may tend to hold form or shape for reholstering better than nylon. Kydex provides more consistent function, than leather but is affected to heat and is noisy when drawing or re-holstering.

## **VII. Retention**

Will you be shopping, patrolling, fighting, fast-roping, swimming, skydiving or protecting with your weapon? At PFC, we often refer to the slew of modern retention devices as "hardware solutions to software problems." Meaning that instead of training individuals on the how's and why's of proper weapon-retention tactics, we see manufacturers continue to add layers of lockdown to prevent officers' weapons from disappearing. Sadly, we have seen this used to justify reductions in training time while actually promoting injuries because weapon access was so heavily impeded by layers of retention hardware.

## **VIII. Color**

Various militaries (with the exception of the US Army's ill-advised foray into digital camouflage) have understood the need to breakup color, shadow and contrast for generations. And some colors tend to conduct heat in certain environments. For those carrying concealed; a muted color or one which matches adjacent garments can help weapons visibly melt away to all but the most trained eye.

## **IX. Talk**

Ask questions of dealers, email manufacturers and gain the opinions from trusted friends. Whenever possible "test-drive" a demo model from a retailer or borrow one from a friend to try out before pulling out your credit card.

## **X. Tested**

By YOU. Before putting a holster system into use, you need to execute a great many repetitions on it to learn the in's, out's and eccentricities which will affect its performance in the fight.

Hopefully you have noticed that 'cost' is not on this list. We are constantly amazed that someone will spend \$700+ dollars on a weapon and then carry it in a \$20 flea market special. You cannot place a price tag on your safety and survival. Think safety first, you are priceless.