Navy SEAL Reveals 10 Steps to Survive A Mass Shooting

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What the hell is wrong with us? Seriously, what is happening to the fabric of our society?

How do we explain the fact that a small fraction of a certain subset of our society—young, often socially isolated males—now find it to be a valid course of action to use a weapon to murder as many people as possible before turning the gun on themselves or perishing in a hail of police bullets?

I have no idea. I have no answers.

I do not think "the availability of guns" is the answer, for one, though certainly it is one part of the possible solution. I do not think that the media's tendency, at least in the past, to pore over and report on the various personality traits and manifestos of past shooters, thus bestowing on them sought-after infamy, is the whole answer, either.

It probably plays into the phenomenon, though. A phenomenon I'm afraid isn't going to end anytime soon, unfortunately.

In short, like everyone else, I have no earthly idea what is going on with the rash of mass killings plaguing the United States. They frighten and depress me, like they do everyone else, primarily because I think about my children being at school, at the mercy of a deranged shooter, with little available protection.

Instead of feeling completely powerless to do anything about it, though, I choose to be as prepared as possible. You should be, too. We are not helpless. We have options. It is time to ingrain them in your head.

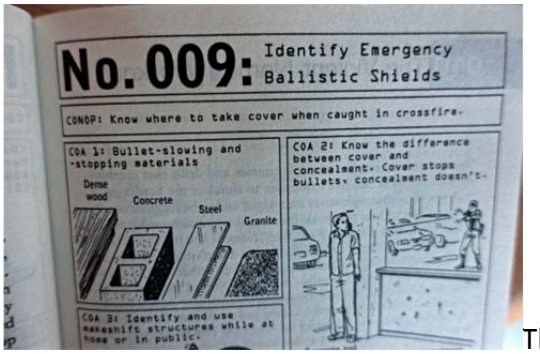
With that in mind, here are 10 things you can do to be prepared—mentally fortified—to increase your chances of surviving a mass shooting. God forbid you ever find yourself in the middle of one, but if you do, these courses of action will help increase your chances of survival. I sincerely hope you never have to put them to the test.

1. Carry a concealed firearm

This is likely controversial, depending on the laws where you live, but I rarely go to large public gatherings anymore without some sort of concealed firearm nearby. No, I am not an AR-brandishing militia type who wears his weapon on his hip for all to see (and to be impressed with). I am not saying you should walk around all tactically kitted up.

I am merely suggesting carrying a compact handgun chambered in a reasonably powerful caliber. You also better be able to handle it and fire it safely and accurately, or you risk doing more harm than good. You have to be trained and competent to effectively use your weapon to stop a mass shooter. If you are, use it when the time comes.

2. Strategically position yourself



The Loadout Room

Before a mass-shooting event ever begins, position yourself so that you can react proactively. That might entail positioning yourself near an entrance or exit so that you can escape quickly or quickly confront a shooter, or it might mean being close to good cover and concealment or a place in which you can barricade yourself and your loved ones.

Think of a storage room, or an inner office in a building. This is basic situational awareness. Know your surroundings, identify multiple ways out, and game plan your reactions before a shooting ever starts.

3. Quickly identify the scenario.

Needless to say, time is of the essence. There will probably be a brief few seconds before the shooting starts, during which it should be clear that something bad is about to happen.

The most illustrative recent example of this was the thwarted train massacre in France, in which three Americans identified the sound of a magazine being locked and loaded, and acted quickly to stop the shooter (August 22, 2015 – Amsterdam to Paris train). You may only have five seconds in which to process and make a move to escape or counterattack. Do not waste them. They are the golden seconds.

4. Barricade the shooter's point of entry.

Thomson Reuters

Anything you can do to block a passage could save you time and potentially your life.

If, during the golden five seconds, you realize there is an entryway between you and a shooter—for example, if he is in an adjacent room—use the time to block the shooter's entrance to your location.

Close and lock the door, and barricade it with furniture. Then seek cover. You have now made yourself a harder target.

5. Move instantly.

Whether you are going to make an escape, attempt to stop a shooter, or simply barricade a door, if you hesitate, or delay, you are lowering your chances of survival. You have to act fast. You need to settle on a course of action and do it. It may not work, but what will *surely* not work is staying immobile and waiting to be a victim. Move. Do something. Quickly.

6. Get low and go.

Flickr / The U.S. Army

Staying low is basic infantry training.

In the fire service, we teach children the term "get low and go" when teaching them how to escape a smoke-filled house. Well, the principle is sound in a mass-shooter scenario, as well. Basic infantry training teaches you to hug the ground to avoid enemy gunfire, and to continue to shoot and move to avoid becoming an easy target.

Even if you cannot shoot back because you do not carry a weapon, you can move. Keep yourself low to the ground, and put distance and cover between you and a shooter, making your way toward an exit.

7. Call for help, quickly.

Once you have reached a place of cover and concealment, or are otherwise able to do so safely, call 911. It seems obvious, but the sooner this call goes out, the sooner help arrives to neutralize the shooter and treat the wounded.

Minutes matter in treating the casualties, some of whom will be in danger of bleeding to death if not treated quickly. A speedy response by fire, EMS, and police will help prevent further casualties and save those who can be saved at the scene.

8. Work as a team.

Oak Hills Local School District

Students block the door and huddle together in a corner in an Active Shooter training video from Oak Hills School District.

Once the shooter has launched his plan and the shooting starts, like it or not, you and the others around you are instantly part of a team, a unit, a fighting force. If you work together, you have a better chance of surviving.

This might be as simple as following the lead of a brave bystander who charges a shooter, by helping wrap up the shooter and taking him to the ground, or by working together to barricade a door. You all have got to work together. Someone needs to take charge. Some will panic and freeze. Snap them out of it, and fight together.

9. Carry a tourniquet *(and get trained on how to use it)*

Following on number seven, *above*, you will hear lots of people say that concealed carry is the answer to preventing these incidents—and I do not fully disagree—but you will rarely hear anyone advocating keeping a tourniquet close by.

CAT tourniquets, for example, are the size of an iPhone 6, and are *proven* lifesavers on the battlefield and in municipal police, fire, and EMS systems. They can be placed on yourself, or others, to stop extremity bleeding and prevent bleeding out. Throw one in a purse. They are easy to use, and the field-expedient versions (belts or T-shirts) rarely work. Consider it.

10. Worst case, throw stuff and charge.

CBS News

If all else fails, attack your attacker.

If you have no weapon, you have no way out, you have no time to get low and go, and your children or wife or loved ones are there with you, and you are face-to-face with a shooter, you have one option: charge. This is the civilian equivalent of rushing into enemy fire, or jumping on a grenade.

You have to somehow summon every last bit of courage you have and decide that the maniac in front of you is not going to harm your loved ones today. Throw the closest object you have at hand—keys, phone, chair, book, etc.—at the shooter to buy yourself a split second to distract him from shooting, and tackle that piece of garbage. Unleash every ounce of rage and animal instinct you have; make sure the shooter goes down and does not get up.

Gouge his eyes, tear out his throat, crush his testicles, and fight as dirty as you know how to in order to make sure you get up and walk away, and he does not. If you are going to die, die fighting.

Once again, I hope you never have to employ these actions, but if you do, I hope they keep you alive.

Note: Some photographs have been deleted from the original online posting:

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