



Best Ammunition and Caliber for Self-Defense

This document provides a detailed analysis of the best ammunition and caliber options for both concealed carry and home defense scenarios. It includes expert evaluations of handgun, shotgun, and rifle platforms, ballistics performance, ammunition types, and practical guidance to help you choose the most effective and manageable solution for your needs.

Comparative Summary – Common Handgun Calibers for CCW

Caliber	Stopping Power	Recoil	Capacity	Availability	Recommended Ammo
9mm Luger	12-18" penetration, ~0.5-0.7" expansion	Low-Moderate	10-15+	Excellent	Federal HST, Speer Gold Dot
.40 S&W	12-18" penetration, ~0.5-0.6" expansion	Snappy	9-13	Good	Winchester PDX1, Speer Gold Dot
.45 ACP	12-16" penetration, ~0.7-0.8" expansion	Heavy	6-10	Common	Federal HST, Hornady Critical Duty
.380 ACP	~8-13" penetration, ~0.45-0.55" expansion	Light (moderate in micro pistols)	6-7	Fair	Hornady Critical Defense, HST Micro
.38 Special	12-16" penetration (with +P)	Moderate-Stout	5	Wide	Speer Gold Dot 135gr +P
.357 Magnum	14-20"+ penetration, ~0.5-0.6" expansion	Very Heavy	5-6	Common	Federal 125gr JHP, Gold Dot 135gr

Comparative Summary – Home Defense Calibers/Firearms

Weapon Type	Strengths	Drawbacks	Recommended Ammo
Handgun (9mm/.45)	Maneuverable, 15+ rounds, low recoil (9mm)	Least power, requires precise shot	HST, Gold Dot, Critical Duty
12ga Shotgun	Massive close-range power, multiple projectiles	Heavy recoil, 5–7 round capacity	00 Buckshot, #1 Buckshot
20ga Shotgun	Lower recoil alternative to 12ga	Slightly lower power, fewer load options	#3 Buck, #2 Buck
AR-15 (.223/5.56)	Low recoil, high capacity, excellent stopping power	Loud indoors, over-penetration risk	Hornady TAP, Gold Dot 62gr
AK-47/7.62x39	Hard-hitting, good barrier penetration	Higher over-penetration risk	Hornady SST, Federal Fusion
Pistol-Caliber Carbine	Low recoil, easy to aim, shared mags	Less power than rifle, pistol-level penetration	Same JHPs as CCW: HST, Gold Dot

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