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.22 Rimfires

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- Gear reviews and tests - Emergency and survival -



Publication: Friday 6 September 2002

Description :

The often over-looked, under-appreciated, inexpensive .22 lr. rimfires

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That's a title that needs some explaining, right?

What I mean is that, while most survivalists (indeed, Americans in general) have at least one .22 rifle or pistol in their house, they're regarded mostly as plinkers or small-game and pest guns. I wouldn't suggest that we all get rid of our centerfire guns in favor of .22's, but I feel that a slight revision of our priorities is in order.

In previous articles I've given my version of what is and isn't vital survival gear, with most of the emphasis on guns mainly for hunting, and self-defense being a secondary purpose. I still believe that to be the most likely scenario. If we do our part to maintain a low profile, and not go looking for dragons to slay, we stand a much better chance of surviving another day. I'm not advocating cowardice here, just injecting a little reality. I sincerely doubt that the world we are all preparing to survive in will be anything like the books or movies would have us believe: bands of marauding brigands or hordes of Russians coming for our women. Rather, it's more likely that any encounter with a fellow survivor will be fairly amicable (read: wary), and won't happen very often. We'll all be more interested in getting three squares a day than in continuing to fight lost causes. Certainly, there will still be isolated pockets of fighting over most anything, or nothing; we just have to do our best to avoid such areas. Rambo wouldn't have survived long in the real world, and neither will you if you go out in search of glory and adventure.

You're still going to have to go armed in this brave new world we're postulating, but it won't be necessary to carry around a fully-automatic rifle and LAW rockets. A centerfire handgun and rifle of your choice should suffice. But, back to the reason for this article, and why we should carry a good .22: those ever-elusive calories in the form of furry little critters. Without your local grocery store, we're all going to be pretty much spending a lot of our time on hunter/gatherer activities, just like our prehistoric ancestors. (By-the-by, this won't be a good time to be a dedicated vegetarian). That being the case, which would you rather have on hand to bag a squirrel or rabbit that pops up in the midst of other activities, a .22 or your regular weapons?

Remember, we weren't out specifically hunting, just jumped Mr. Cottontail while going about our daily business. So, out comes the .357, and you try for a head shot so that you won't spoil too much meat. Or you could use your rifle, if it's handy. Better chance of making that head shot, but the economics of using a rifle round to bag a bunny is question-able. Of course, if you had a good .22 pistol on you at all times, loaded with the proper ammo, that rabbit would be in the pot for a negligible investment from your ammo stores.

An IMI Mountain Eagle autoloader, such as I plan on carrying, takes up very little space and weight, yet allows a much greater flexibility in your weapons load. It would be with me at all times, in addition to my Browning Hi-Power and whatever longarm I might be carrying, allowing me to take targets of opportunity such as the aforementioned rabbit. Loaded with some of the better high- or hyper-velocity hollow points or truncated cone bullets, it would also serve as a self-defense piece in a pinch. If possible, carrying a back-up weapon is always advisable. In a survival situation, that back-up would have to do double duty. Alternately, you could carry a folding stocked 10/22 or something similar in your backpack. While it wouldn't be as handy as having a pistol on you at all times, it would still be worthwhile. Twenty-two ammo is available everywhere, especially .22 lr. No matter where you were in the world, you could feed a .22 caliber weapon.

But how to carry that .22 back-up piece, and what to feed it?

My IMI pistol and SOG bowie knife are kept on a web belt with shoulder strap, which I would be wearing at all times, even in a secure environment such as my base-camp. To carry all of my other survival gear, I use a mussette bag which has food, water, and all the rest. These would be worn whenever I was outside, whether working or lounging. To increase my readiness profile (such as in a survival situation), I could add a centerfire pistol, and my choice of longarm

.22 Rimfires

in case of imminent attack, or for whatever other reason. Extra ammo and we're all set.

As you can tell from the description, I can carry a fair amount of gear, all without sacrificing mobility or flexibility.

As to the best ammo to use in your .22, that is at least partially decided by your own circumstances. How much can you afford to spend, what types are readily available in your area, what do you want to do with your rifle or pistol? Assuming you wish to be as versatile as possible (a fine trait in a survivor), you will probably want a round that works well on both four-footed game animals as well as two-footed potential problems. When picking a round (or rounds) for your .22, remember to check it both for function and accuracy in the weapon you intend to use it in. All rounds are not created equally, and they all perform differently in different guns.

To illustrate this point, I gathered together six different types of ammo, all bought from my immediate area. They comprise both high- and hyper-velocity loads, with a variety of bullet types.

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Row	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1.	Copper Plated, Shallow HP	HVHP	36	Federal	1280/1010	Bulk packed, bargain ammo. \$9.00/550 rds
2.	Stinger	HyHp	32	CCI	1640/1132	Pricey at \$2.50/50 rds., but worth it. Fastest .22 lr around
3.	Super X HP	HVHP	37	Winchester	1280/1013	Not as explosive as Stingers, but they cost 1/2 as much and work about as well.
4.	American Eagle	HVS	40	Federal	1255/1017	Standard round-nose lead ammo, good value.
5.	Viper	HyTCS	36	Remington	1410/1056	Sharp nose profile may not feed in all weapons but increases damage.

.22 Rimfires

6.	Thunderbolt	HVS	40	Remington	1255/1017	Better-than-average RNL w/hard lube; should result in less barrel leading.
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Notes Regarding Bullet Table: HVHP- High Velocity Hollow Point.

HyHP- Hyper velocity Hollow Point

HVS- High Velocity Solid points

HyTCS- Hyper velocity Truncated Cone Solid point

RNL- Round Nose Lead Velocities are listed as Muzzle/100 yards FPS, quoted from catalog specs and from rifle-length test barrels

Test Guns

Remington Viper 522 autoloading rifle

IMI Mountain Eagle autoloading pistol

Most of the bullets tested had some form of copper plating, which is beneficial to minimize barrel leading and improve overall accuracy. The American Eagle loads had a somewhat waxy coating on them, just like the old days; the Thunderbolt had some type of hard lube which causes the bullets to be quite a bit darker than standard.

For my Eagle, I plan to carry a mixture consisting of either Super-X hollow points and Viper solids, or CCI Stingers, again with the Vipers. This gives a favorable mix of both penetration and expansion, without having to switch magazines. Since my Eagle has adjustable sights, all the loads mentioned shoot close to the same point of impact. I know this because I set the sights that way, a practice I can't recommend highly enough. It's fun and educational. More on that later.

I carry my Eagle in an Uncle Mike's holster, and keep four extra fifteen-round magazines in a pouch attached to the holster, plus the twenty-rounder in the pistol itself. Eighty rounds of high velocity ammo is easy to carry, yet provides both meat and defense. I carry another 150 rounds of this same mix in my mussette bag. Fifteen-round magazines from Ram-Line will also work in the Mountain Eagle, giving you another source of supply. Ram-Line, Pachmayr and other such companies have all sorts of items that will both dress-up and improve the performance of your weapons. Invest in their catalogs, and those of similar companies.

Range Testing

One thing surprised me during range testing, and it showed up quite early on. When shooting the American Eagle ammo through the Remington rifle, they failed to properly cycle the action. This was the first time that round had been fired through this rifle, and proves the necessity for testing such things. While the standard velocity load would eject and strip the next round all right, it wouldn't kick the striker carrier back far enough to engage the sear, leaving the weapon un-cocked. That meant I had a bolt-action autoloader. Another quirk showed up later, while firing the Stingers. The second round out of the magazine nosed up and lodged against the breech face, then the bolt slammed into it. While this rendered the gun inoperable, it was an easy jam to clear and did not occur during the remainder of the magazine.

Also, while looking at the picture of the fired targets, don't be misled by the seemingly-less-than-optimum performance of the Remington Vipers. Both they and the Federal round noses hit high on the can, not centre, leading to less expansion. The Federals didn't lose much, because they were only standard velocity, but the Vipers are much more damaging than this. I've used most of these loads on game, and can attest that their performance on full soda cans is on a par with their field effectiveness.

Finally, whether or not you choose to carry a .22lr pistol full time in a survival situation is a personal decision, but a good twenty two in your personal arsenal should be mandatory for all prepared survivalists.

Post-scriptum :Original article at [OldJimbo's site](#).