

Create A Women's Personal Defense Package

Personal protection is a hot commodity in the firearm industry. Gun stores are registering record defensive-gun sales as people line up to buy firearms — making now an excellent time to focus on self-defense.

There's a huge segment of the female population that gets interested in firearms as a means of protection, and hopefully, sticks with shooting because it's fun. Successful dealers need to address both the fun and serious side of firearms by providing personal protection equipment and a social element to keep women interested in firearms.

Popular Defensive Products

Dealers with classroom and range facilities have an advantage when it comes to providing an educational and social atmosphere to women, but most gun stores can create a small lecture area in which to introduce women to personal protection. A little open space, a few folding chairs and

a lot of great products are all you need to host a self-defense seminar.

Caswells Shooting Range in Mesa, Ariz., is able to conduct both non-firearm personal-defense classes and defensive handgun courses. Chris Watson, shift supervisor, says their store stocks all the equipment women need for personal protection. The personal-defense class covers non-lethal defense options such as pepper spray, Tasers and flashlights.

"One of the most popular pepper sprays is the ASP Palm Defender," Watson said. "It's shaped like a tube, has refillable cartridges and is carried on a key ring. It's very safe to use and it lasts forever."

A further feature women like is the easy-to-use thumb-flip safety.

Another popular non-lethal defense item is a sturdy flashlight. According to Watson, Caswells' best-selling flashlight is the G2 from SureFire.

"It's one of their least expensive models,

and it's bright enough to temporarily blind an attacker," Watson said. "It's also very durable."

Caswells carries the full line of SureFire flashlights, and the Strike Bezel feature makes them very popular for defense.

Caswells also does a brisk business in Tasers. Current models come in six different colors and most come equipped with a laser sighting system.

"We sell a lot of Tasers," Watson said. "Women buy an even mix of colored and black models."

The ASP Palm Defender is one of the most popular pepper sprays at Caswells Shooting Range in Mesa, Ariz.



More Than Just Firearms

A basic handgun course is also part of the curriculum at Caswells. Watson says he has noticed women have a distinct preference for semiautos after taking a class and spending some time on the range.

"The most popular guns are the Springfield XD line and the Glock Model 19," he said. "Revolvers are still popular, but after using one of our rental guns, women tend to settle on the XDs and Glock as favorites."

Purse holsters are a steady source of income as well, according to Watson.

"We sell a few purse holsters a month," he said.

Basic firearms classes cover carry methods, and many women quickly realize their clothing doesn't lend itself to concealed carry.

"Purse holsters and fanny packs are popular with women. Coronado Leather has a good selection of purses, and they're high quality," Watson said.

Coronado Leather has more than a dozen styles of purses in a variety of colors and sizes to fit any woman's needs. Each purse has a key-locking zipper that conceals a pocket designed specifically for carrying a handgun. There is also a removable leather holster with Velcro to secure a firearm in the desired angle or position.

A final item to round out a woman's self-defense package is sights. Watson says women are prone to purchasing laser sights

because they can act as a deterrent. Women are also taught in the self-defense class that the first shot is the most important, and laser sights give them an advantage.

"We sell a lot of Crimson Trace and LaserMax sights," he said. "The most popular regular sights are Trijicon Night Sights."

Social Aspect

Once your lady customers are up to speed and fully equipped with all their personal protection needs, give them a social outlet to hone their skills. Caswells has two ladies' days a week, where women receive free range time, gun rentals and eye and ear protection. The only item they are charged for is ammunition. This is a great time for women to practice with their own firearms and test-run guns they plan to purchase.

If you have the space, create an area that focuses on personal defense, both lethal and non-lethal. Stock it with items such as pepper spray, flashlights, Tasers, self-defense guns, concealed carry methods and laser sights. The idea is to provide a one-stop personal defense area where the woman who came in for pepper spray can also be sold a flashlight. Or perhaps the person who only came in to buy a firearm for defense might also look at pepper spray and see it, too, has a place in her self-defense plan.

This area isn't just for women only. Call it your "personal defense corner," and load it up with items everyone needs to keep themselves and their families safe.