

## Fitting a Handgun

**NOTE:** *Always make sure the firearm is unloaded and pointed in a safe direction!*

1. Know what you want that gun for and pick a gun that meets that purpose in the best caliber for you.
2. Apply your master grip and assess how the firearm feels. If unsatisfactory and it can't be easily fixed, e.g. replace the grips, or is otherwise bothersome then STOP and find another firearm.
3. If it passes the feel test, then align the firearm in your strong hand. To do this, apply a firm grip with the strong hand. Align the barrel in an imaginary line that extends up the middle of your arm. This will help you to be sure that your hand is placed correctly for the next two steps. Todd Jarret shows you how to do this here: <https://youtu.be/ysa50-plo48>.
4. Next, while maintaining the strong hand grip, try to touch your thumb to your middle finger. If you cannot the grip is too big. If there is a big overlap you can use a larger grip or grip glove or grip sleeve. If the grip is too large you will not pass the next test.
5. If #3 is okay or can be easily corrected, then place ONLY the tip / first portion / distal phalanx of your finger on the trigger. If you cannot get the "J" look with your finger so your middle joint can flex, you will never shoot the firearm well. The middle joint must flex. This is where the power of your pull is mechanically achieved.
6. If things are going well to this point, fully couch the gun in your strong hand and apply your master grip and point the firearm in a safe direction at a target. Observe how well the firearm points at the target. If you need to make big changes to align your sights this is not the firearm for you. You will need to always make those changes each time you use the firearm. Some firearms just do NOT point well for some people. This particularly affects point and flash sight picture shooting.
7. After completing #5, try releasing the magazine. You should be able to do this with MINOR manipulation of the firearm. It is okay to turn the firearm in your hand. If you cannot easily perform this task, you will not be able to do so under pressure. STOP. Do NOT choose this firearm.
8. Next is the slide or cylinder manipulation stage. With the magazine removed, try racking the slide on the semi-auto or opening the cylinder on the revolver. On an auto-loading, a.k.a. semi-auto, pistol, this simulates a worst-case scenario of clearing a double feed. If you cannot rack the slide or open the cylinder effectively and / or have problems operating the slide lock / stop, then STOP and do NOT choose this firearm.
9. Next, manipulate any action devices on the firearm, externals like de-cockers and thumb safeties. Try to work the ejector rod on the revolver. If you cannot work them easily then STOP and do NOT choose this gun.
10. Finally, you need to be able to test the trigger on the unloaded handgun. Always ask permission. Make sure the trigger is fully forward "at rest". If you are not allowed to test the trigger, find another source for the gun. NOT testing the trigger is a big mistake. Some people choose a gun and then find out they cannot pull the trigger, or they buy the gun then hate the trigger and spend money, time or effort trying to fix the trigger.

Adapted from Jon Thompson of Riverside Sporting Gear (Elk River, MN) and Todd Jarrett videos

ver. 3/2/2022