

# **Expert Opinion: *Biggest mistakes women make when buying a 1<sup>st</sup> gun***

by Barbara Baird - Wednesday, June 26, 2019

Women continue to rock the gun world as they grow more interested in self-defense and the shooting sports. According to researcher John Lott in a 2018 report from the Crime Prevention Center, there has been a “general upward trend” for women in the purchasing of handguns for self-defense. Unfortunately, enthusiasm may supersede knowledge, especially when purchasing that first handgun. We talked to women in the gun world and asked them to list the big mistakes women make when buying handguns.

Michelle Cerino, who, with her husband, owns the *Chris Cerino Consulting and Training Group*, listed these five reasons that backfire on someone who buys a gun that doesn't work for her:

- Buying a gun that is the wrong size.
- Getting a caliber they are afraid to shoot.
- Buying one with a safety and not learning how to run it.
- Buying a revolver without the strength to pull the trigger.
- Purchasing a gun she can't lock to the rear.

Il Ling New, a rangemaster and instructor at *Gunsite Academy*, added these mistakes to the list:

- Not shooting one like it first (borrow, rent, etc.).
- Mistaking “it felt good in my hand” for “it will FIT me when I am actually shooting it.”
- If a beginner: buying a handgun just for concealment—not understanding that it will NOT be appropriate or optimal for training/practicing.

New says there is no order to the mistakes she listed and all three are of equal importance. “My line: Guns are like shoes; they must fit the use [occasion], and they must fit the user,” said New.

Stacy Bright, an NRA instructor and Concealed Carry Trainer in Southwest Missouri, combined many of the previously made points in this recommendation: “I'd say the biggest mistake would be buying something based on someone else's suggestion—whether that's a friend, spouse or even a sales clerk. She should see how each one fits in her hand, learn the differences, and if possible, shoot them first.”

Cheryl Todd, who owns *AZFirearms*, with her husband, Danny, recommended that women not buy a gun before they try it on the range first. “Try before you buy is vital! Like shoes, underwear and bras, one size and one style does NOT fit all!”

Todd employs a female sales associate, Tiffany Villalvazo, a college student majoring in Wildlife Management. Villalvazo lists the main situations she sees from behind the counter as to how a woman comes to regret buying a gun:

- They let their significant other choose for them: Trusting that their significant other will get them what is best for them. “I hear the words, 'They know more about guns than I do.' Not knowing all that goes into finding the perfect firearm for the unique individual.
- They chose it based off looks versus practicality/functionality and how it fits them as an individual. “If a firearm looks like it's a good fit for me, it must be, right.' No. I personally think of it like buying shoes. The same style of shoe will be different for every brand/manufacturer. It's the same with guns.”

- They let the salesperson tell them what is a good fit for them. A lot of women are initially intimidated or scared of looking silly when it comes to buying their first firearm. This results in them usually just going with the option that the first salesperson offers them.

Next, Villalvazo listed reasons she has noticed that are most common as to *why* they regret buying it, not specific to *how* they came to choosing those guns:

- Recoil (Small gun, big caliber): Ah, the small gun / more recoil issue. This is usually the "regret" reason with snub-nosed revolvers and sub-compact 9mm semi-autos.
- Lack of safety features (no thumb safety, mainly): Typically found with women who choose to purse carry with their new gun. The level of confidence it takes to carry chambered takes time for some. (I know it did for me!) And some people just realize later on that they are not comfortable carrying something that does not have a manual safety, or they were not properly educated on purse carry options for non-manual safety firearms.
- Trigger pull/poundage/weight and hard-to-rack the slide back: Women over a certain age are encouraged to buy the tiniest gun they can find. But what they don't take into consideration or realize most of the time is their strength and ability to properly handle the firearm and all its functions.

Villalvazo says the reasons women regret buying a certain firearms should become key focus items when she goes to replace the "mistake" with a better option.