



[CONDITION] YELLOW

LOOKS GOOD
ON YOU



by Beth Alcazar



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LOOKS GOOD ON YOU

Making the decision to carry a concealed firearm is not to be taken lightly. It's a very important decision ... and an important responsibility, whether you're a single woman, a college student, a mom of three, a newlywed or a grandparent. It's a decision that affects you and those around you, and it's a decision that you need to make every day. But it's not easy. It's complicated ... and it's challenging. It involves maintaining the correct mindset and being physically, mentally and emotionally prepared. It requires thinking ahead and using your best judgment. And just as a responsibly armed woman consciously follows the universal safety rules, she also maintains situational awareness. She remains confident, safe and in control at all times. That takes commitment and dedication and, hopefully, some training.

Ultimately, no matter who we are or how long we've owned a gun, making the choice to carry a concealed firearm brings about a change. This change can dictate what you wear, the people with whom you hang out, where you go, when you do things and even why you choose to do them. Concealed carry also brings about a variety of responses and emotions. We feel differently and we think differently and, because of that, we move through our daily lives in very different ways. For most women, being armed provides a new source of equality, certainty, security and responsibility that we might not otherwise have had.

A SOURCE OF EQUALITY

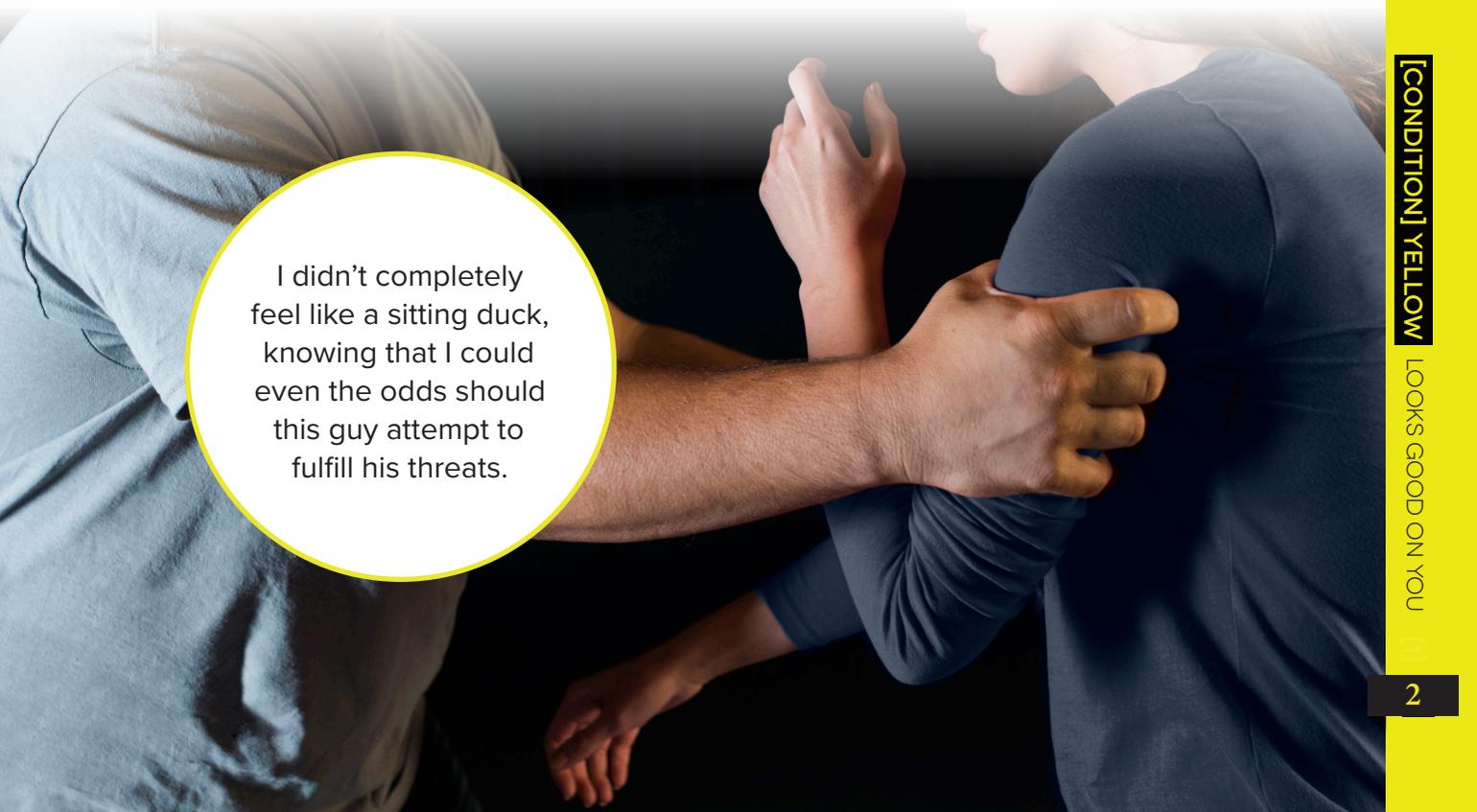
We need to face the facts: The average woman is not as physically strong as the average man. We're built differently. We're typically shorter, smaller and less muscular. In a hand-to-hand struggle, even if a woman works out, lifts weights or studies martial arts, she might still be overpowered by a man ... unless she has a gun and she knows how to use it.

Women are also the more victimized gender. Look at the reports and statistics: Every nine seconds in the U.S., a woman is assaulted or beaten, and, every day, more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends. Females are still more likely to be kidnapped, raped or murdered, but firearms can change that. Firearms can give a woman a fighting chance. A friend of mine, who was the victim of a stalker for several years, knows this fact all too well.

She stated, "I carried my gun with me all the time, everywhere I went. I made peace with the idea that I might have to use it to save my life at

some point. I read lots of books and took advice from law enforcement. I didn't completely feel like a sitting duck, knowing that I could even the odds should this guy attempt to fulfill his threats. Carrying a gun meant that I could choose not to live as a victim in a waiting game ... with a madman holding all the cards."

Many women live out similar scenarios every day. Some live in constant fear, with no means to protect themselves. Others make the choice to train with and carry a gun. There's a well-known quote that says, "God made man, but Sam Colt made them equal." You can interpret that phrase to mean that all men (and women) are on equal ground when they are carrying firearms. Many people even describe guns as equalizers, rather than weapons, because guns can put us in a better position to defend ourselves against violent criminals. Carrying a gun provides us with a tool to fight back and, in some worst-case scenarios, a gun is undoubtedly the best way for a woman to defend herself.



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A SOURCE OF CERTAINTY

Along with a feeling of equality, carrying a firearm can also help provide confidence and control. Some women even call it a sense of empowerment. They are emboldened and renewed by their decision to carry a firearm and by their understanding of how to use it. In fact, many of the women I meet and talk to or whom I have friended and followed on social media use and embrace that term, and they strive to share their empowerment with others. It's not enough just for them to know how to protect themselves; they want everyone in their family, in their circle of friends and in their community to understand the importance of self-defense and overall situational awareness.

I know that in my life, having a gun with me at all times makes me much more aware of my surroundings. I no longer live in Condition White, ambling aimlessly, glued to my smartphone or distracted by all the goings-on around me. I pay attention. I take precautions. As a responsibly armed American, I live by Col. Jeff Cooper's Condition Yellow, with a deliberately changed mindset and an understanding that this world isn't always a nice place.

This is not paranoia; it's preparedness. It means using common sense and paying attention. Condition Yellow has been described as a "relaxed state of awareness." So while I'm not darting my eyes around and crouching behind every corner, I am taking notice of everything and everyone in my environment. I'm not allowing anything to take me by surprise. I may be looking around, playing the "What if?" game, keeping my mind alert and considering the possibilities. My demeanor, actions and behaviors communicate prepared and assertive attention.

Additionally, making the decision to carry concealed has caused me to keep an eye out for the safest parking spots, the closest exits and the shadiest characters. I've read books and I've taken classes. I've prepared myself, and I've trained with my gun. If a situation were to go wrong, I'm certain I could find a solution, whether it be to **avoid**, **escape** or, as a last resort, to **defend**.

This is not
paranoia; it's
preparedness.



CONDITION WHITE:
Unaware and not paying attention to people, things or situations around you.



CONDITION YELLOW:
Aware but relaxed — taking notice of your environment.



CONDITION ORANGE:
Alert phase. Something is not right, and you've noticed it.



CONDITION RED:
Action phase. Ready to engage the threat.



A SOURCE OF SECURITY

One of the most obvious and important changes for those who choose to carry a firearm is an enhanced sense of security. Of course, having a gun is not the solution to everything, but it's certainly an added layer of protection. And most women do feel safer when they train with and carry a firearm. In fact, according to a recent National Shooting Sports Foundation study, "The single most important reason women decided to purchase or otherwise own a gun was for defense, both self (26.2 percent) and home (22 percent)."

Ask the woman who walks across a dark parking lot every night after work. Ask the real estate agent who shows houses to strangers every week. Ask the young lady who has some

shadows in her past. They would all agree: Part of the transition from not carrying a gun to carrying one every day is building on a source of safety they might not have had before.

Of course, no matter the circumstances, there's really only one, surefire guarantee that you will walk away safely from a deadly encounter: **Avoid** it in the first place. That sounds like common sense, but oftentimes we get so caught up with life and responsibilities that we forget the basics. This would include remaining situationally aware of all your surroundings and steering clear of uncomfortable or unsafe environments or situations. Don't go somewhere alone if you're unfamiliar with the area or if you know it to be dangerous. Don't take the shortcuts that lead you down dark pathways or set you apart from the rest of the crowd. Don't approach strangers



Don't get so caught up with everyday distractions that you're unaware of what's going on around you.

or let them get too close to you. Be aware. Make smart choices. Turn around and go back, if you have to. There is no shame in being careful. And that's what avoiding a bad situation is all about. Think and plan ahead, and listen to those gut feelings. Your instincts are there for a reason, and they are often right.

If you are ever in a little deeper than you wanted to be (or should have been), you still have the option to back out. We don't always have the benefit of avoidance, but you can still have a decent chance of walking away safely. So if something just looks, sounds or feels wrong, leave. Get out! Perhaps a large crowd of people is starting to get antsy or angry. Maybe several folks nearby are yelling or even engaging in a shoving match. Those are your signs to **escape**. Seek out the nearest, easiest or best escape route and make your quick exit. You are not responsible for what happens after you leave. You are responsible for yourself and, perhaps,

whoever might be with you, especially your own children; make sure they are safe. Don't stick around to see if things escalate — maybe they never will. But if the situation does escalate, you may have lost your chance.

If that happens to be the case, and you cannot remove yourself or your friends and family from a dangerous situation, then you have to be ready to **defend** yourself. Defending yourself may involve a series of steps, including yelling for someone to stop, warning someone to stay back, running to cover, drawing your firearm, shooting or some combination thereof. Humans are naturally designed to protect themselves from harm, but all of your mental preparation and physical training will be tested when adrenaline begins rushing through your body. That is not the time to make the decision to protect yourself. That is the time to take action. Your life — and the lives of others — may be at stake.



A SOURCE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Undoubtedly, choosing to carry concealed also adds additional responsibility on several different levels. It adds responsibility in that a woman who consciously chooses to defend herself and her loved ones must remain ready at all times. If that woman is a wife or mother, she knows that she has the lives of other people to consider. But having a gun also adds a level of accountability in that a woman with a gun should know how to properly and effectively handle it.

Thankfully, there are many courses and classes available that are created for — and even taught by — women. From situational awareness to defensive pistol, there are countless training programs available for women who are interested in becoming more proficient with concealed firearms.

As we all know, it's not enough simply to have a gun; you must make the conscious decision that you are willing to use it if the monsters of this world make doing so necessary. You

must know how to use the firearm safely and proficiently, especially in the darkest and worst situations. It's all part of the learning process. This doesn't mean you need to master shooting from prone, become a certified instructor or train like a Navy SEAL (unless you want to). But it does mean that you have a responsibility to find classes and instructors in your area. It means you need to learn more about guns, practice what you learn and build good muscle memory so you are better prepared to use what otherwise might be a useless piece of metal in your holster.

There's no doubt that I am a profoundly different person from the woman and mother I was before I made the decision to carry a firearm. I am physically changed because of how I dress, how I move, how I train and how I carry. But I am also emotionally changed because of the decisions I have made, the situations I have contemplated and the obstacles I have overcome.



Find the training that's right for you at www.uscca.com/training

Dear Concealed Carry Woman,

I've seen you around. And I've watched you. You're paying attention. You stay away from uncomfortable environments. You remove yourself from uncertain situations. You notice people, and you make casual eye contact. You don't let your guard down. And even though you are a very pleasant and kind person, you are never blissfully unaware. You save the daydreaming for another time and place. You are never caught up in your thoughts or just running on "cruise control."

You have the right mindset. And that's truly the most important thing with which you can arm yourself. You have made the determination that you will not be a victim. You make smart, conscious decisions, but you also count on those God-given, subconscious reactions. You always live in the present, but you look forward to the future, and you have learned from the past.

You are mentally prepared. And you are willing to take action.

With increases in crime such as theft, rape and assault, you realize that this world isn't perfect and that you need to be prepared to defend yourself — and quite possibly your family and others around you.

You embrace your natural fear; your gut instinct; that intuition that tells you when something is just not right.

You do your very best to plan ahead ... and to always be prepared.

You are vigilant. You keep your eyes and ears open and observe what and who is around you. You look for safety. You look for escape. You look for the positive, the helpful and the possible. You keep your head up, both literally and figuratively. And you take mental notes. You understand that your survival could depend on it.

Avoid. Escape. Defend. Those words are always in your mind. In that order. Every time.

You train with your firearm. You know marksmanship. You know defensive shooting. You understand situational awareness and the Cooper

Color Codes of Awareness. You never live in Condition White. You are always in a state of controlled readiness. And you realize how important this information is for everyone, so you share it with all those who will listen.

But you also realize that it's not enough just to know the terminology, the ropes or the politically correct answers. You know that putting the concealed carry lifestyle into practice takes dedication and earnestness and that it comes with an awesome level of responsibility.

Many people admire you. Others fear you. Some don't understand why you do what you do. But still, you choose to embrace your 2nd Amendment rights. You choose to carry a firearm for protection, and I appreciate and respect you.

So don't let others get you down. Don't let their misunderstanding cause you to second-guess yourself. Keep on keeping on. You are doing the right thing.

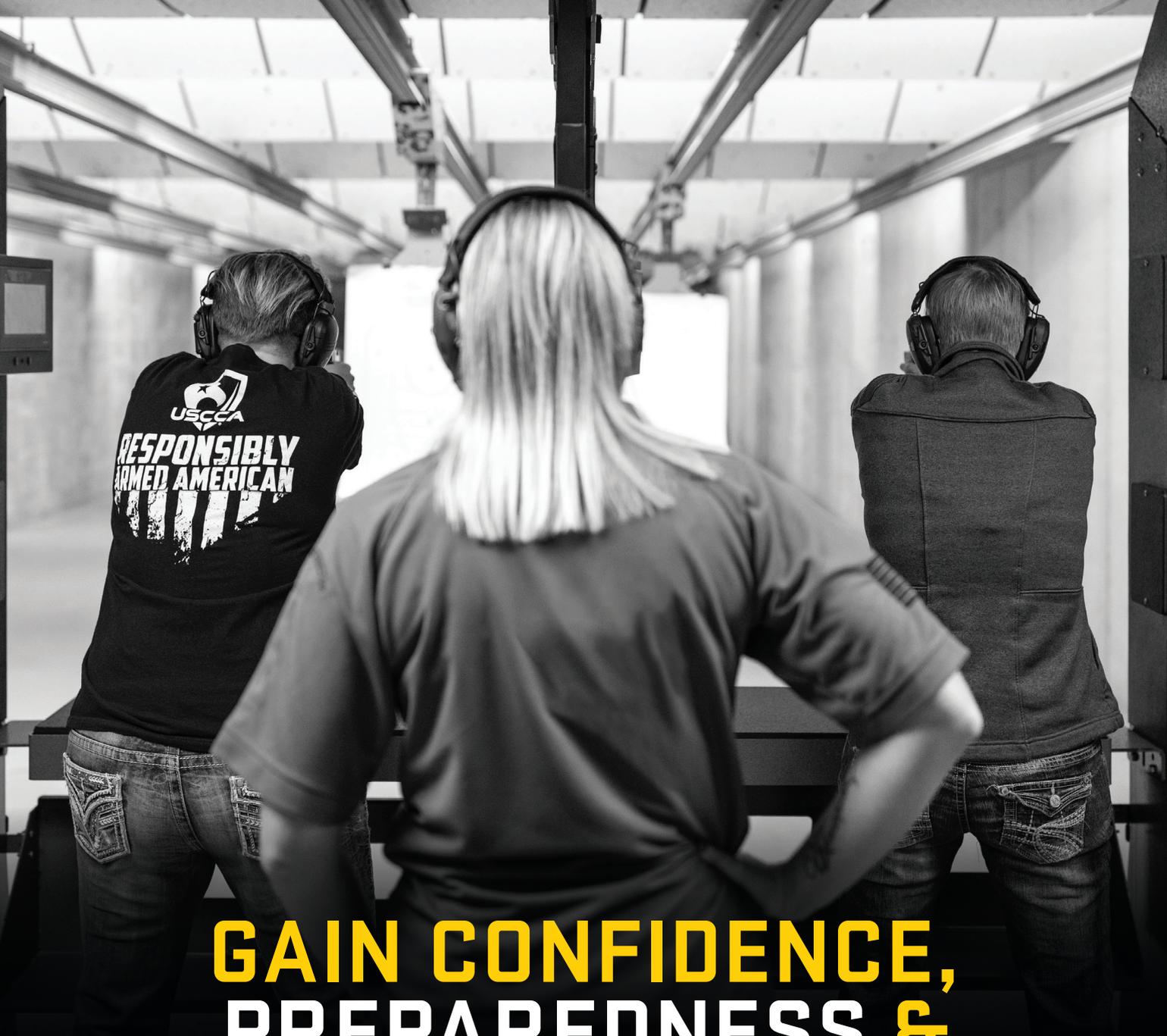
You are capable.

You are inspirational.

You are strong.

*And, by the way ... **yellow looks good on you.***

*Sincerely,
A Fellow Sister in Arms*



GAIN CONFIDENCE, PREPAREDNESS & PEACE OF MIND

*WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO THE
U.S. CONCEALED CARRY ASSOCIATION*

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