

INSIDE LOOK AT THE NEWEST GEAR



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Engaged Media By Beckett

SUBCOMPACT SEMI-AUTOS

POWERFULLY POPULAR

Possibly the most popular size of concealable handguns, the subcompact range offers eminently concealable handguns that contain some serious firepower. You probably can't fit any of them in a pocket, but that's fine—established holster makers like Old Faithful, Galco, DeSantis, Crossbreed, and others, collectively offer several hundred different holsters designed to conceal your gun anywhere from your armpit to your ankle or even off-body entirely.

The range is ruled by two calibers: 9mm and .40 SW, with models frequently offered in either caliber. You'll get two or three more 9mm rounds in a same-frame handgun than in its .40 SW counterpart, but at the slight tradeoff of kinetic energy and wound channel dimensions. Some will be attracted to the comparatively lower recoil energy of the 9mm, while others embrace the larger .40 SW...and truly savvy shooters look for a pairing of their subcompact with their larger pistols.

Many companies now, like Springfield Armory, Glock, and Smith & Wesson, offer several sizes of handgun based around common calibers and configurations. For example, Glock offers their "Practical/Tactical" model 35 in .40 SW for competitive shooters, law enforcement, and exposed carry—that's a handgun with a 5.3 inch long barrel and 15+1 standard ammunition capacity—and at the other end of the spectrum, the model 27 with

extremely shortened slide and grip and otherwise the same ergonomics (and nearly the same controls). In between the extremes of that subcompact 9 shot model and the full-size-plus model 35, are two more models: the fifteen shot model 22 that is extremely popular with police and many federal law enforcement officers, and the slightly smaller (by a half inch in both length and height) model 23. In all, that's four guns based on the exact same caliber, ergonomics, and core components.

If you own a full size Smith & Wesson M&P, or a Springfield XD, or a Beretta Storm or other modern duty (or tactical competition) model, look deep into their catalog for compact and subcompact versions of what you already own. Then you'll only need one caliber in common between them, and all of the shooting that you do with one will help with muscle memory, instinctive manipulation of the controls, and instinct shooting with the other. Really clever shooters not only practice with their carry piece, but standardize the pistols they normally shoot in competitions and for fun around common calibers and ergonomics with their carry piece as well.

So what can you find that's a companion to your existing handguns? Or, where could you start as you build a full complement of similar pistols? There's certainly a great model in here just for you!

—Editor



... the subcompact range offers eminently concealable handguns that contain some serious firepower.

Flush fitting standard capacity magazines aid in concealment, while the extended length "extended capacity" magazines provide additional firepower when you need that more than concealment...and often, they provide a place for your pinky finger, too. Photo by Kahr Arms

