



PROTECTING 'YER PEEPERS

Whenver you're shooting, keep in mind your eyes are a few inches away from very hot gases under a pressure of from 10,000 to 70,000 pounds per square inch. There's also the risk of a ricochet, splash-back, ejected cases or lead-spitting revolvers. Short of some kind of life-saving emergency I would never fire a shot without eye protection — and neither should you.

Protective glasses should be worn when working on firearms as well.

I remember installing a 22-lb recoil spring in a 1911. The recoil spring plug got away just as it was almost in place and hit the ceiling hard enough to chip out a piece of plaster.

While most prescription eyeglasses provide *some* level of protection, they don't take the place of dedicated shooting glasses. Shooting glasses are typically larger than regular eyeglasses, offering a greater area of protection. They usually sit higher so you're looking at lens rather than frame when



Randolph Engineering's high-index, polycarbonate lenses (medium brown clip-on lens here) — hand ground by Bret at Tactical Rx.

shooting from various positions, and can be had with a variety of tints.

Since I need prescription shooting glasses, I can't just buy off the shelf. I first learned of Tactical Rx (a Denver-based company and division of Sports Optical) in Editor Roy's *Insider* column (March/April 2014). Recently I had my eyes tested and prescription renewed and it seemed a good time to go shopping.

ACTUAL HUMAN BEINGS

With Tactical Rx you don't point-and-click online. Instead you actually talk with them, either by phone or through emails. They need to know, not just your prescription details, but also what type of shooting you do, what light conditions you expect to encounter and any other special needs.

What a joy it is to deal with people who understand the needs of shooters. The person I talked to was Kyle Ross. I explained my interests are primarily handguns and rifles. Recently I've been doing more long-range rifle shooting from the prone position and with my regular glasses, it seems the upper crossbar of the frame is in the way.

I shoot outdoors under all light conditions, and on indoor handgun ranges, so I needed versatility. My left eye is much more nearsighted than the right, so the resulting left-side lens is quite thick at the edge and doesn't look

very good with open-bottom frames. Kyle took note.

After chatting about my circumstances and getting my prescription, Kyle sent an email with a couple of suggestions for frames. They carry frames from many high quality, popular makers and, if you have a quality frame you like, they can custom-make lenses to fit.

Looking at pictures of frames is nice, but even nicer would be to have them in-hand, wear them for a while and see how they look and feel. Tactical Rx not only *allows* you to test-drive the frames — they encourage it. They will send samples so you know which best suits your needs, before going to the expense of grinding the lenses.

I selected "Sporter" frames from Randolph Engineering, both for the protection they provide and for their versatility. I ordered them with clear lenses so they can be worn as regular glasses. There's an array of clip-on lenses with various tints too, and I selected a brown lens for bright daylight, and a medium yellow for heavy overcast days or indoor ranges.

DOUBLE TOP SECRET


Once you've selected a frame Tactical Rx hand-grinds the lenses in their own shop. Lenses are made from a high-index, very tough polycarbonate so they can be both strong and reasonably thin. According to the web site, Bret, the lens guru, first runs your prescription through a complex set of optical formulas to fit the frame and provide a clear, distortion-free view right out to the lens edges.

In fact they say this is the most important part of the process and is "double top secret." Not sure if they're kidding, but I'm sure of this: these lenses provide the clearest, sharpest image, over the widest area, of any glasses I've used in 60

years of eyeglass wear!

I see the sights of my handguns sharp and crisp. I can shoot my rifles prone, off the bench, or offhand while hunting, and get a clear image through the scope every time. The quality of materials and workmanship is simply superb.

My eyes are well shielded while shooting or tinkering with guns; protected from tree branches while riding the Polaris or a snowmobile and from glare and stray fishhooks while out in the boat.

Tactical Rx was founded and is staffed by military veterans. They make prescription glasses for military personnel, law enforcement agencies — including the FBI — and for recreational shooters. I can't say enough good things about the quality of the service — and the product. 

For more info: www.americanhandgunner.com/index, Ph: (888) 807-6165



Dave's Randolph Engineering Sporter shooting glasses, with lenses from Tactical Rx, have clip-on colored lenses (here in medium yellow for indoor shooting).