

ENLIGHTEN YOUR DEFENSE



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ROCKIN' 500 LUMENS, STREAMLIGHT'S NEW TLR-8 WML ENHANCES YOUR SAFETY

TEXT & PHOTOS BY STEVE BARLOW

The author, a former LEO, called this gun a reliable and accurate firearm.



TLR-8 combines a powerful light with a max output of 500 lumens and a red laser for an excellent sighting alternative in low light.

Let's take a closer look.

THE FEATURES

The TLR-8 is powered by one CR123A lithium battery. You access the battery compartment by unscrewing the light's bezel and without removing the light from the weapon.

Long, narrow power switches run vertically along each side of the unit. They make the light easy to operate in the dark, under stress. Press either switch and the light turns on or off. Press and hold a switch briefly, and the light switches to momentary-on mode. Release the button and the light goes out. That's a useful tactical feature because a light can also make you a good target.

Pressing both buttons allows you to toggle through the different modes: light only, laser only, and light and laser together. There's

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THE BENEFITS OF A LASER

A laser on a handgun can be something you use with your iron sights, not instead of them. At the distance you've chosen to sight in your laser, your gun's front sight and that laser dot should line up. At other typical handgun distances, it will be close.

So, you can present your weapon as you would normally in daylight to bring that front sight on target as you've trained. If you're in low light and you can't pick up that front sight quickly, the laser dot should be in view.

The laser is useful, too, when you're firing from an unconventional position. During a gunfight, behind cover, for instance, you might not be able to hold the gun out there to acquire your normal sight picture. With the laser, you can put the dot on target and pull the trigger.

ONLINE SOURCES

STREAMLIGHT: STREAMLIGHT.COM
 DESANTIS GUNHIDE:
DESANTISHOLSTER.COM

There are many good tactical flashlights on the market. But the techniques for using a flashlight in conjunction with a handgun usually don't allow for your normal two-handed hold on the gun.

Sometimes you're okay for the first shot, but it can be difficult getting the gun back on target for a follow-up. A weapon-mounted light (WML) can solve that problem.

One of the best new lights is the Streamlight TLR-8. Designed to be mounted on the rail of compact and full-sized handguns, the



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also a strobe mode that, once you program it in, activates with two quick touches.

The TLR-8 is 2.15 inches long, so it’s not a bulky add-on. It weighs less than 3 ounces, but it’s placed at the gun’s muzzle where every little bit can help with recoil control.

The TLR-8 comes with an assortment of adapter plates so that you can fit it precisely and securely to your particular gun. The clamp that secures the TLR-8 to the gun’s rail is held tight by a single bolt. It is slotted so you can use a screwdriver to tighten it, but a coin will do the trick. The bolt is also knurled, so you can hand-tighten it in a pinch.

Adjusting the laser for windage and

elevation is easy using the included tiny hex wrench. I sighted it in to be on target at 15 yards. Closer or beyond that, to reasonable handgun distances, and I was still putting hits where they’d do damage.

Removing the TLR-8 and remounting it didn’t seem to affect the zero appreciably. That’s good to know if you will be taking the unit on and off the gun.

BOLSTER YOUR DEFENSE

The Streamlight TLR-8 has a suggested retail price of \$350. The company also offers a TLR-7 model with light only, no laser, for a suggested \$215. Either one is a worthy addition to your self-defense gear—they can give you greater capability in low light, which is when most conflicts occur. ☉



LET US COUNT THY WAYS

The TLR-8 is compact and what little weight it does add to the muzzle end of the gun also helps in recoil management.

Aside from being able to control your handgun with a normal grip, the obvious benefit of a weapon-mounted light is that it takes no more coordinated effort or skill to use it with a firearm. Where you point your gun is where your light shines. You can assess any threat without the constant need to work at keeping the gun and light focused on the same point.

They are small enough now that many people keep a light mounted to the gun all the time, so it’s there when you need it. Holster makers are responding by offering new rigs designed to fit handguns with lights and lasers attached. DeSantis Gunhide, for instance, has its leather Tac-Lite (with thumb break) and Speed-Lite (without thumb break) holsters for use with TLR-8-equipped guns.

If you don’t want the light attached full time, they’re easy to remove. You can carry the gun all day, then add the light when you reach your destination, whether that’s a remote wooded area, a hotel in a strange town, or home.

They make great handheld lights away from the gun, too. Also useful, because often you don’t want to be pointing a gun where you need to direct your light.