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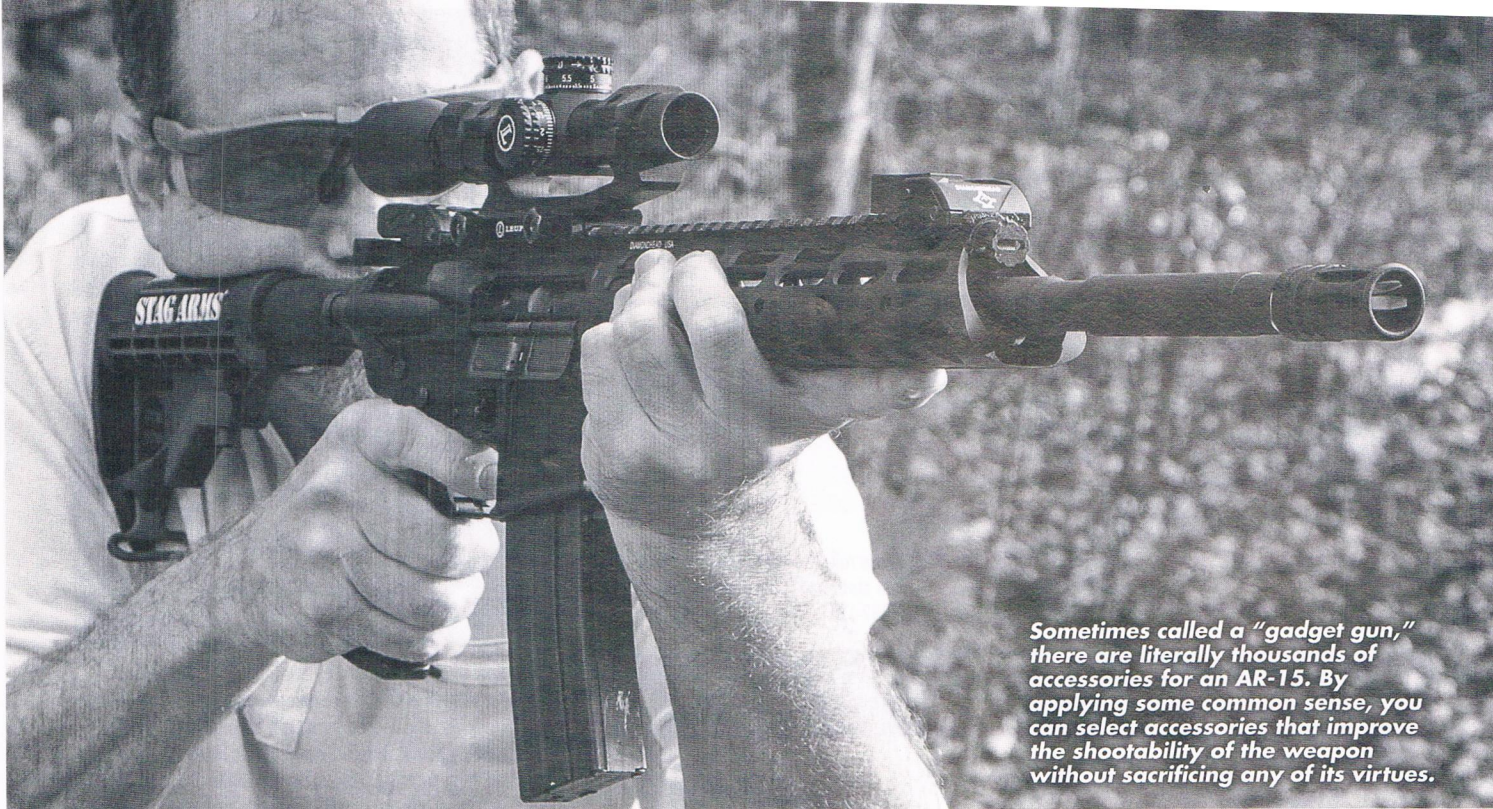
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Sometimes called a "gadget gun," there are literally thousands of accessories for an AR-15. By applying some common sense, you can select accessories that improve the shootability of the weapon without sacrificing any of its virtues.

COMMON SENSE MSR ACCESSORIES

Richard Mann

SEPARATING WANT FROM NEED

Col. Jeff Cooper was known as a pistolero, but he was also a rifleman. In fact, he wrote a very good book about rifles entitled *The Art of the Rifle*. Cooper was also famous for saying all the 1911 pistol really needed to be serviceable was a good trigger and sights you could see. When it comes to the AR-15, those words apply just the same.

If you're reading this you most likely have an AR or have just recently acquired one. You've probably seen all the photos and read all the articles where super ninja shooters have attached lasers, lights, vertical foregrips, cell phones, bottle openers and condom dispensers to an AR. Yeah I know, some consider the AR-15 more of a gadget than a gun

and I don't doubt some find immense joy in gearing up their AR to try and make it look as "tacti-cool" as possible. Fact is, all an AR really needs is a good trigger and sights you can see.

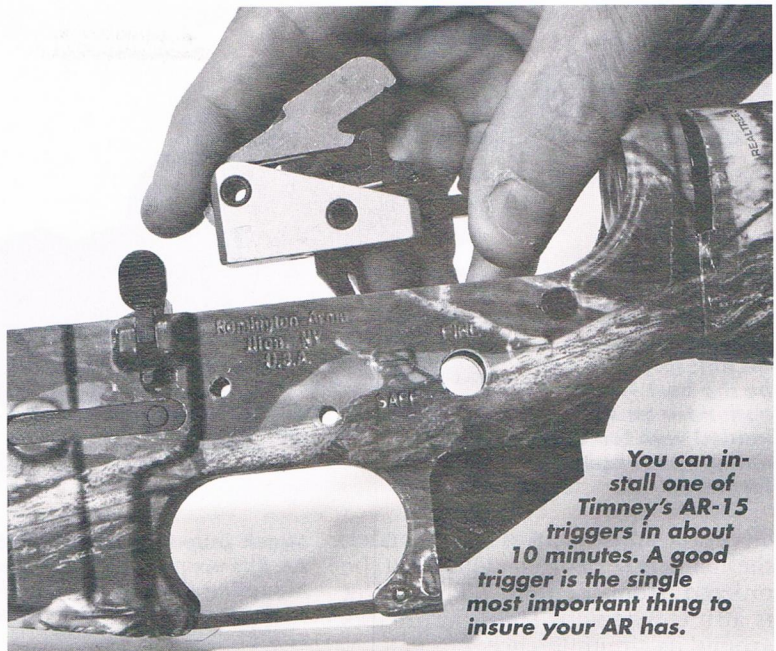
The Trigger

Most off-the-shelf AR-15s have deplorable triggers. Triggers so bad they negatively impact your ability

to shoot these rifles accurately. I'm talking worse than water pistol triggers. These factory stock triggers are most often mil-spec triggers. They work, they are just hard to pull and hard to pull consistently. There are some exceptions like the ARs from Wilson Combat, which come with their own excellent trigger, and the 2-stage trigger on ArmaLite rifles is very nice as well. But, most likely your \$1,000-plus AR has a trigger on it worth about 50 cents.

The good news is this is an easy fix. Timney's AR-15 trigger is a drop-in unit you can install in about 10 minutes with no special tools. You can choose a pull weight of between 3 and 4.5 pounds, which is about perfect for this platform. A good rule of thumb when it comes to long gun triggers is to choose a trigger pull weight no

Most AR-15s come with a mil-spec trigger. These triggers will make the rifle go "bang," but that's about the extent of their virtues. Timney's AR-15 trigger provides an easy do-it-yourself fix.



You can install one of Timney's AR-15 triggers in about 10 minutes. A good trigger is the single most important thing to insure your AR has.

more than half the total weight of the rifle. Common sense should tell you if you're pulling more weight than the rifle weighs, barn doors will be about all you can hit.

I have several ARs and all are fitted with a Timney trigger. I don't care what other accessories you put on your AR — if you don't make sure it has a good trigger all you will really have is a cool-looking gadget. If you buy no other accessory for your AR, buy a Timney trigger. You need to understand the most important interface between a shooter and a rifle is the trigger; it's the thing which allows you to tell the rifle what to do. Having a bad trigger is like having an employee who doesn't speak English. You'll just never know what to expect

when you give either instructions! \$219.95 direct from Timney.

Leupold Mark AR MOD-1 1.5-4X Rifle Scope

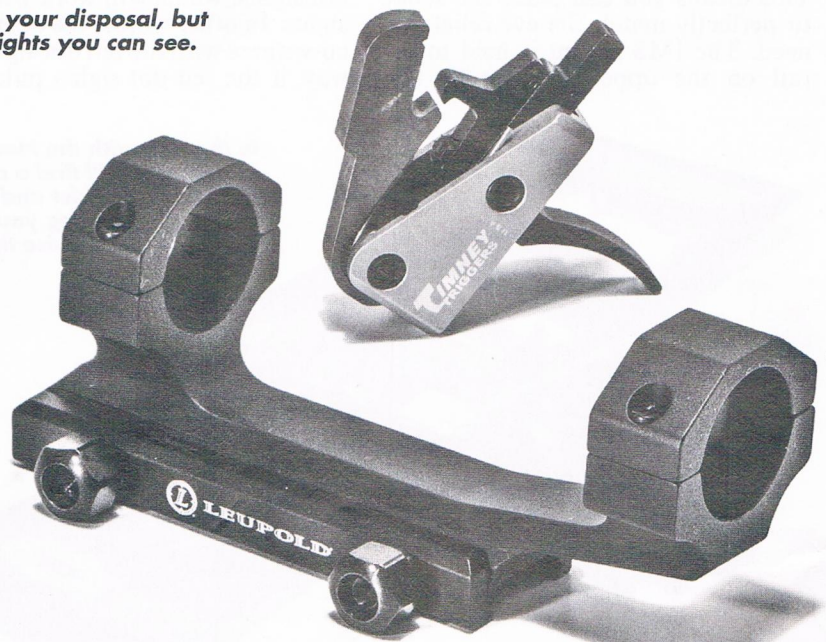
I don't think there is any limit to the types or number of sights you can attach to an AR-15. That being said, after a lifetime of shooting various optical sights and testing them head to head, I'm convinced the best multipurpose sight for any long gun and for most shooters is a low-powered, traditional rifle scope.

Leupold's Mark AR MOD-1 1.5-4X rifle scope with the SPR Green FireDot reticle is a 1" rifle scope with Leupold's slick Multi-Coat 4 feature. This makes the scope as clear and crisp as a third generation iPad with

the brightness turned up all the way. It has a large eye-box to allow a lot of leeway with head positioning and it also has the SPR reticle which has an inner 10 mil circle with mil marks along the vertical and horizontal cross wires. When you throw this scope on target it seems to center itself.

The scope is also unique in that it has 1/10th mil adjustments as opposed to 1/4 or 1/2 MOA clicks. This makes the scope easier to use at long range and the mil adjustments also coincide with the mil reticle. To further maximize the external ballistic potential of this scope, Leupold etched the elevation adjustment dial with range indicators for a common .223 Remington load. (This is, after all, a tactical scope.) Custom

There is an entire world of AR-15 accessories at your disposal, but all your AR really needs is a good trigger and sights you can see.





Leupold's excellent Mark AR MOD-1 1.5-4X Rifle Scope might be the best 1-sight option for an AR. It's loaded with features and purpose built for the AR-15.



It comes with tactical windage and elevation turrets marked in 1/10th mil increments and with ballistic correction for a popular .223 Remington load.

elevation adjustment dials to match the ballistics of your load can be ordered from Leupold. The turret is also etched with 1/10th mil marks around its circumference.

The scope was so easy and quick I couldn't find another with the same attributes. I especially liked the FireDot reticle, which has an adjustable glowing green center. Suggested retail: \$625.

Leupold Mark 2 IMS (Integral Mounting System)

Riflescope selection can be personal and dependent a great deal on the intended purpose of the rifle. Regardless, you still have to mount the scope to the rifle, and you might want to alternate between a traditional scope and a red dot. Leupold's Mark 2 IMS mount will position a traditional type riflescope to the perfect height above the receiver, and because of its configuration it allows a great deal of leeway in positioning. This means you can place the scope to perfectly match the eye relief you need. The IMS mount is held to the rail on the upper receiver by two

Match Leupold's Mark AR MOD-1 1.5-4X Rifle Scope with their Mark 2 Integral Mounting System and you have an AR ready, multi-purpose sight which can be removed and installed in seconds.



screws and can be quickly removed and installed without a loss of zero.

In many cases you can use this mount for a traditional riflescope without removing the rifle's rear sight if it is one of the folding versions. (Practically speaking, it's never a bad idea to have iron or open sights as a backup to an optical sight.) With an AR it's also common to mount red dot sights, which will work with open sights. In other words, the open sights co-witness with the red dot sight. This way, if the red dot sights pukes, you

just look through it and use the open sights. Your cost? Less than \$150.

Meopta M-RAD

Speaking of red dot sights, modern high-quality red dots like the M-RAD (Meopta-Rapid Acquisition Dot) are rugged and will stand up to battlefield conditions. Red dot sights are also great for training new shooters. The instructions are simple: put the red dot on the target and pull the trigger. There are no eye relief or parallax issues to contend with.

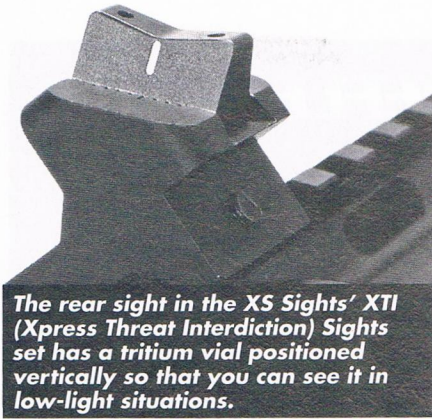
In the box with the Meopta M-RAD you will find a detailed instruction booklet and a tool kit with everything you need to mount and service the sight.



Meopta's M-RAD is a modern version of the red dot sight; it's light, compact, rugged and a perfect companion to an AR-15.



The front sight in the XS Sights' XTI (Xpress Threat Interdiction) Sight set has a tritium vial surrounded by a white circle, which makes it easy to see in any light.



The rear sight in the XS Sights' XTI (Xpress Threat Interdiction) Sight set has a tritium vial positioned vertically so that you can see it in low-light situations.

The Meopta M-RAD is one of the smallest red dot sights available. With its quick-release, Picatinny rail interface, the M-RAD is a great AR optical sight for close to moderate range. It's extremely reliable, thanks to the intelligent battery monitoring and long battery life it provides. Other features include five levels of dot intensity in the day and night mode, night vision compatibility, an auto-off function and the ability to operate without fail in a wet environment.

This is an all you need in a red dot sight, and it even comes with a compact armorer's kit full of the tools you'll need for mounting at various heights, adjustment and maintenance. Just throw it in your soft-sided AR case and use as needed for fighting zombies at breath-smelling distance or for teaching your children to shoot. The reliable mounting system will maintain zero no matter how many times you install or remove the sight. This gizmo only weighs 3.7 ounces and sells for around \$350.

XS Sights' XTI (Xpress Threat Interdiction) Sights

Sometimes you need to shoot things with an AR that are just too close for you to use your optical sight, particularly if your optic has magnification or is zeroed at a moderate range. As mentioned, one option is to have open sights that co-witness with your optic, but these can be distracting and only really work with zero-magnification optical sights. XS Sights has developed an ingenious solution that will work on any AR with a full-length rail. These sights are called XTI Sights.

XS Sights' Monty Long, a serious competition shooter, worked with Andrew Brady of Lone Star Armory to develop this sight system, and after trying them I believe they are indeed a grand solution. Essentially, these sights — front and rear — clamp to your upper rail and extend slightly out to the right. On a pedestal from the base there is a platform with a

45-degree angle. The front and rear sights are mounted on their respective pedestals. The rear sight emulates the rear sight used with XS Big Dot pistol sights: it's a shallow V with a white line at the center. It's adjustable for windage. The front sight is a post with a rounded top and a 0.14" white circle surrounding a tritium vial. It's adjustable for elevation.

These sights are fast to acquire and you can mount them to provide whatever sight radius best suits your eyes and coincides the scope mounts for your optic. To use them all you need to do is rotate the rifle to the left 45 degrees and they are right there in front of your eyes. You can even zero these sights to compensate for the drastic offset encountered with AR sights at close range. Suggested retail is \$150. What a great solution to a true tactical problem!

So there you have it — all the accessories you need for your AR. Does this mean you should not attach something else or different to the most popular rifle in the world? No. But, if you have these accessories your ready for 95 percent of anything you might need to do with your AR. Yeah, the AR is kind of a gadget gun. But, it's a gadget gun with a purpose and everyone should have at least one that is properly equipped. 🔫

FOR MORE INFO:

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