

comfort & style issue

# CONCEALED CARRY

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TIM COOPER

# WHAT ABOUT THE GUYS?

## *ALEXO ATHLETICA CARRY OPTIONS FOR MEN*

**S**omewhere along the line, you probably learned that embracing the concealed carry lifestyle meant you had to make some sacrifices – namely in the way you dress. To avoid showing the outline of your firearm under your clothing (“printing” in firearms lingo), you’d need an uncomfortable holster to wedge a firearm into your waistband and a loose-fitting, untucked shirt to cover everything up ... right? Well, maybe not. Amy Robbins founded her company, Alexo Athletica, to challenge that notion.

### THE HISTORY

While Robbins had grown up with firearms in the home, she hadn’t given much thought to carrying one in public. That would change in 2013 after she was recruited by National Rifle Association Television (NRATV) to represent the rapidly expanding number of female gun owners in the U.S. She began to notice the number of people on the set – men and women alike – who carried guns. Robbins learned that some of her colleagues at the modeling agency carried as well. A year later, she obtained her own concealed carry permit.





**DISCREET & COMFORTABLE**

Alexo Athletica's Tuck & Carry system utilizes a built-in spandex belly band to provide IWB carry options – without the need for a belt – in its growing lines of athletic wear.



#### **READY TO ROLL**

*The Tuck & Carry Active Short, pictured above, combines the comfort of athletic wear with the convenience of a built-in holster system.*

Like many women, she decided to begin toting her gun in a purse, but it didn't take long for her to realize that off-body carry presented some unique challenges — among them, the impracticality of exercising with a purse. Robbins began searching for fashionable activewear that also provided functional support for a concealed firearm, but she was not impressed with her options. Although women represented the fastest-growing demographic in the firearms industry, she found that the unique needs of

female gun owners were largely ignored. Coming from the fashion industry, Amy knew many women would simply choose not to carry if it meant wearing baggy clothing that made them look heavier than they actually were.

In her words, "Women want to be lifted up, sucked in and smoothed out." This reality inspired Robbins to found Alexo Athletica.

In 2017, after three years of research and development, Alexo introduced its first line of concealed carry leggings and activewear for women. Since then, the product line has filled out nicely to include a wide variety of items for ladies, including carry running shorts and Alexo's popular Tuck & Carry Skirt.

#### **A LINEUP OF PRODUCTS FOR MEN**

I last spoke to Amy at the 2019 SHOT Show in Las Vegas and confided in her that many men face the same challenges as women when it comes to carrying

in comfort: We also desire tactical functionality without clothing that screams, "Look at me, I'm carrying a gun!" She told me to be patient; that something was in the works for the guys too. That came to fruition a few months ago, just before Christmas, when Alexo introduced a brand-new line of men's apparel, consisting of the Men's Tuck & Carry Jogger, the Men's Tuck & Carry Active Short and the Men's Active Shirt.

With a chuckle, Robbins recalled when her husband Drew, wearing a long face, told her he wanted to be "sucked in too." Jokes aside, Robbins largely credits Drew for the design of Alexo's new men's activewear.

"Drew primarily heads up Alexo operations," she said, "but he has given us lots of design ideas too. He's actually the one who pushed us to create the women's running shorts and the patent-pending Tuck & Carry design, introduced in the women's skirt and now part of the men's joggers and shorts too."

Drew played an integral role here as well.

"He doesn't come from the firearms industry, nor does he have a tactical background," she said. "So he sort of represents the 'everyday average guy' out there. He's just a dad who [...] strongly supports our Second Amendment right

## “SINCE 2017, AMY ROBBINS AND HER LEGION OF ARMED FEMALE CUSTOMERS AROUND THE COUNTRY HAVE EMBRACED THE CONCEALED CARRY LIFESTYLE WITHOUT COMPROMISING COMFORT OR FASHION.”

to keep himself and his family safe. At the same time, Drew is also very picky about his clothing. It has to be as comfortable as it is functional. I knew if we could make a perfect pant for him, we'd hit a home run.”

Robbins explained that attempting to design apparel to fit everyone is one of the most challenging aspects of the research and development process. However, just because the new Alexo line was designed for dads doesn't mean the apparel won't work for the tactical crowd as well.

“We're winning over those guys too,” Robbins continued. “Several guys who are heavily involved in the industry have evaluated our clothing — from former Green Berets to tactical instructors. Just like the rest of us, they need something comfortable to wear when filling up their gas tanks, stopping by the local convenience store at midnight or going out to catch a movie.”

To Robbins' point, highly specialized tactical clothing serves important functional requirements that do not necessarily prioritize style or comfort. It's therefore not surprising that clothing makers in the firearms space have had difficulty getting away from a “tactical” boilerplate. This paradigm has fueled the notion that we must carry firearms at the expense of comfort, and it is ripe for challenge.

“I just refuse to believe that,” Robbins stated. “I knew there had to be a better way — and that's what led me down this road. As a woman, it was very difficult to get used to on-body carry. First and foremost, I have never worn belts. I've lived in athletic wear all my adult life. There had to be a way to integrate carry capability into comfy and stylish clothing for women *and* men.”

### **ENTER THE TUCK & CARRY SYSTEM**

Indeed, Alexo's patented Tuck & Carry system is an all-out game-changer for those who find an IWB holster uncomfortable or simply want an alternative way to carry in casual attire without a belt. Both the Men's Jogger pants and Men's Active Short incorporate this design, which is essentially a spandex belly band that rides high on the waist and is permanently sewn into the garment. Ambidextrous carry pockets surround the band at the 1, 4, 8 and 11 o'clock positions, so whether you prefer appendix, strong-side or small-of-the-back carry, Alexo has you covered. Of course, the carry pockets not used for firearms can be used for extra magazines and other EDC items.

The carry pockets themselves warrant special attention.

Each one is divided into two distinct compartments: the inner — closest to the body — is sized to fit a compact or subcompact firearm (up to 23 ounces loaded); the outer is designed to hold Alexo's proprietary trigger guard — a nominally priced, rigid rubber plate that prevents inadvertent access to the trigger. While the trigger guard is not a required accessory, it is highly recommended to enhance safety.

There is plenty of external storage too: a hidden phone pocket behind each thigh; deep, side-slip pockets; and a back welt pocket with a zippered closure. A faux waistband located belt-high, below the belly band panel, allows you to tuck in your shirt if you desire.

If you read the words “belly band” and grimaced, rest assured that the Alexo joggers and shorts are similar to a conventional belly band in function only. Most belly bands are constructed of coarse elastic and hook-and-loop fasteners that can rub the skin raw. However, Alexo has taken great care to source fabric — a nylon/spandex blend — that is soft and comfortable. It provides gentle compression to hug the midsection and pull the firearm close.

A drawstring can be cinched up to provide additional support.

### **TEST RUN**

*The author tested the Alexo Athletica Tuck & Carry Jogger, pictured below, in his daily workouts and gives them high marks for function, comfort and concealability.*



After wearing the joggers for a few days with my SIG P365 in the 4 o'clock pocket, I quite literally forgot I was carrying a firearm. Although it will be a few months before I can test-drive the shorts on a run, I have worn them under a pair of sweatpants to carry my gun and found they offered the same comfortable experience.

The Alexo Men's Active Shirt provides no functional features for carrying a firearm but feels great against the skin and coordinates nicely with the other items.

I can only pass along a few minor points of criticism. First, the joggers have tapered legs with gathered cuffs at the bottom. A straight-leg version might be a nice option for those who prefer a loose fit around the ankles. (This would also allow access to a backup handgun in an ankle holster for those so inclined.)

Second, the jogger side pockets are huge — I'd even say cavernous. They can billow out a bit and force you to have to reach a long way down to

fish items out. Finally, at this time, as the product line grows, it's a sure bet Alexo will offer a variety of styles and colors for the guys, just as it already does for the ladies.

### ALEXO AND SPRINGFIELD

Speaking of more options, Alexo Athletica has recently announced a collaborative relationship with Springfield Armory to market a line of carry and activewear for men and women. The apparel was originally scheduled to launch at the 2022 SHOT Show in January. Unfortunately, due to COVID concerns, many exhibitors (including Springfield) canceled plans to attend, though the launch party has been rescheduled.

Robbins is excited about the opportunity to work with Springfield.

"These guys have been fantastic partners," she said. "I've been watching what Springfield has been doing in the market for a long time. Of course, they meet the needs of customers who appreciate great firearms like

the Hellcat. However, I also love what they've done from a marketing standpoint. When I think of most of the big names in the firearms industry, 'law enforcement' and 'military' come to mind. But with Springfield, I really think 'consumer.' And that's what makes them a perfect partner for us — they understand where the new generation of firearms owners is going. They understand that concealed carry is really driving the market right now. [Alexo and Springfield] have a unique opportunity to [...] increase our brand awareness and promote the lifestyle side of concealed carry."

The collaborative lineup will be co-branded, offering some unique apparel for both men and women. Some of the items will offer the proprietary Tuck & Carry functionality already found in certain Alexo products, but others will simply be stylish activewear and loungewear pieces that support the respective company brands. According to Robbins, going beyond concealed carry with Springfield has taken Alexo into some exciting new territory.

"The relationship has pushed us to work with fabrics and designs we would not otherwise have explored," she said.

### DARE TO CARRY DIFFERENTLY

There's no question that clothing is an important consideration when you're choosing to carry a concealed firearm. However, since 2017, Robbins and her legion of armed female customers around the country have embraced the concealed carry lifestyle without compromising comfort or fashion. While it might be difficult for men to imagine life without a holstered gun stuffed between their bodies and a tight belt, Alexo Athletica now gives them the opportunity to get sucked in and smoothed out in stylish comfort too. And that's not a bad thing.



### SOURCES

**Alexo Athletica:** [AlexoAthletica.com](http://AlexoAthletica.com)

**Springfield Armory:**  
[Springfield-Armory.com](http://Springfield-Armory.com)

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