

THE MARTIALIST: YEAR FOUR, ISSUE ONE

The PALight

Review by Lawrence Keeney

I had knowledge of the PALight some years ago from my association with a now-defunct magazine that sent me some of them to review. That was in my formative years as a gear hound and, as such, I was fascinated by these little flashlights. I still am.



Photo by Phil Elmore

This is a cool little flashlight with a noble mission. It is designed always to be there when you need it. When it comes right down to it, the time you usually need a flashlight the most is when you can't find it. That usually means late at night, such as when a storm has just blasted through your neighborhood and the power is out. The hall is pitch dark; you are stumbling over shoes, cats, chairs, and other things that should not be on the floor. Your big-dollar, high-tech flashlight is somewhere in your bedroom. It may be in the dresser, on the computer desk, or it may have rolled under the bed. Chances are, you won't be able to find it. The PALight won't have that problem. I'll explain why.

The PaLight is a 3 ounce, square shaped flashlight with an overwhelmingly rubber case. The flash is made of two sections, held together

with a metal band that snaps around the middle. A nine-volt battery powers it. This is a good idea that we will talk about later. It does seem to me that the engineers who designed this light probably built it around the battery. The PAL is an LED flashlight and, for its size, it does very well. A four-stage switch activates it.



Photo by Phil Elmore

The first click activates the light in what the company calls a power saving mode. In this position, the light is bright enough to help you find your keys in the dark, illuminate the doorknob so you can get your keys into the lock at night, and help you accomplish other, similar tasks. The company claims the power-save light will shine for 200 hours before the battery dies.

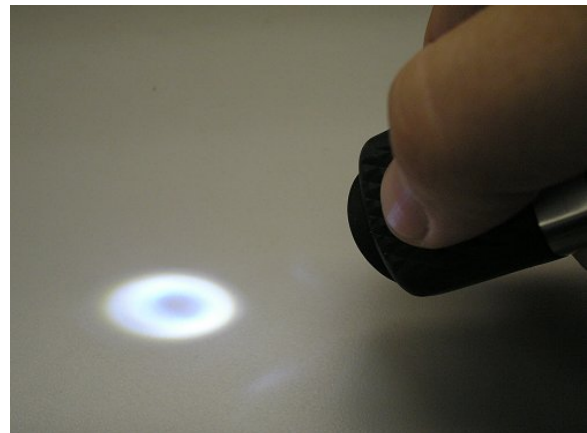


Photo by Phil Elmore

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The next click activates the PAL in high beam mode. The company claims the beam will reach out to about 30 yards, but that is conservative. I have stood at the end of my porch, which is twice that long, and was able to clearly see items at the other end. In fact, one evening I was able to spook a White Tail Deer hiding in the trees behind my house, using the PALight. I can also stand on my back porch in the dark and read the license plate on my car, which is usually parked 50 yards away under a dark carport.

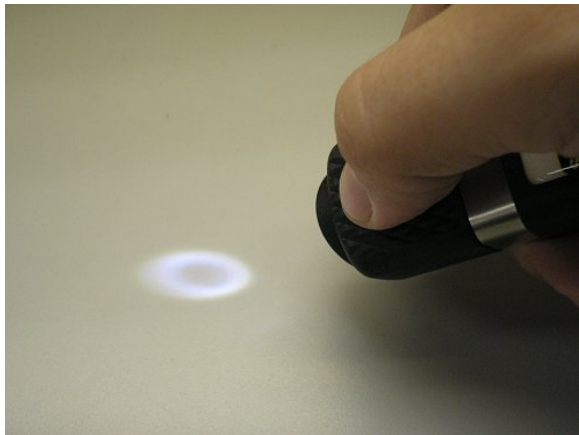


Photo by Phil Elmore

Then there is the emergency strobe mode. Three clicks activates a slowly flashing light. The purpose of this is obvious to anyone with a survival-oriented mindset. Let us say for the sake of argument that you take a wrong turn during a snowstorm and end up stranded without cell service. Chances are excellent that a police car, helicopter, or rescue person may pass by your location at some point. Activate the light and set it on the roof of your car, on the hood, or somewhere else that allows the flash to be seen. It is a field-expedient emergency beacon. It would be equally as useful if you were lost in the woods. I don't get to the

woods that often, but the PALight would be excellent for those who do.



Photo by Phil Elmore

The sleeper function, so to speak, of this light is the one I call the find-me-in-the-dark mode. It is a very dim but discernable light that is on **all the time**. By that I mean you cannot turn it off. The factory claims it will operate that way for two years even if you never turn it on. This is, in my opinion, the primary appeal of the PALight.



Photo by Phil Elmore

Go back to the blackout I spoke of earlier. You stumble into your incredibly dark bedroom, glance across the bed, and spot a dim white glow. *Abra cadabra*, there is your flashlight. Run over, grab it, and you have a flashlight to find your stuff. What could be easier?

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When camping, if you hike to the field latrine and accidentally drop your \$75 dollar tactical flashlight in a place from which, let us say, you won't want to get it back, what then? A \$12 USD PALight lost is easier to digest than one six times that expensive.



Photo by Phil Elmore

Another point in the light's favor is the battery we talked about earlier. A point recently made about the PAL at www.survivalblog.com struck me as one I hadn't thought of before. The well-motivated martialist has flashlights powered by D, AA, AA or Lithium 123 cell batteries. In the aftermath of a natural or man-made catastrophe, one might find themselves without sufficient batteries to power all of these lights. This is especially true if the problem lasts for more than a few days.



Photo by Phil Elmore

A trip to an area convenience store is likely to prove fruitless. People will have stripped the shelves of anything useful, and that includes flashlight batteries. However, there will probably be a few 9-Volt cells hanging lonely on the shelves, feeling unappreciated. It just makes good sense for a survivalist to have flashlights that take all sorts of different batteries.

The light is shaped similarly and just slightly larger than the battery that powers it. The flat case ensures it won't roll off the table at a bad time either. Finally, I discovered it would float. A few years ago, during a Florida vacation, I torture tested a PALight. Feeling adventurous one evening, I threw it from the third-floor of our hotel into the pool. It landed, bobbed a couple of times and began to float. The light continued to work with no trouble. Later, I decided to see if it would survive a high drop. A third floor toss onto the cement walkway saw the flashlight bounce a couple of times and, well, that was about it. You can't kill this light.

I recommend the PALight. It's cheap, durable, and easy to use. It is so cheap, in fact, that this family owns five of them. This model can be had by clicking on www.themartialist.com and asking our esteemed host, Phil Elmore, to order you one. While you are at it, get him to order you two of them. You'll thank me later. ♠

"On a large enough time line, the survival rate for everyone drops to zero."

- Chuck Palahniuk