

The Opinion: At the Gun Store: The M2.0 version of S&W M&P 40 Compact is longer, taller, and heavier than the original. Kind of like a new model of a familiar car. This new version M2.0 Compact is closer to the full size than the original Compact. The visual cues that allow you to spot a full size from a M2.0 Compact is the full size slide juts out from the frame just a bit and the palm swell curve bends down at the heel of the grip.

This review uses the original S&W M&P 40C for comparison since it is the new variant of the Compact name. The first major departure from the original is the lengthened barrel, from 3.5" to 4.0". The full size M2.0 maintains the 4.25" barrel and there also a 5" barrel model in the M2.0 line.

The barrel is stainless steel externally coated in Armornite for wear and corrosion protection. It has a 1:10" twist rate.

The slide is longer to accommodate the barrel and consequentially you get a sight radius of 6.3 inches. The length is up from 6.7" to 7.1". There are fish-scale serrations on the front of the slide. They are only on the widest part of the slide immediately above the dust cover. They will assist those who "press check", but are not distracting from the clean sculpted cut along the side of the slide.

The texture on the frame is more aggressive than the original. It is rough like skate board tape. There are four grip panels included with the M2.0 Compact: S, M, ML, & L. The Medium is installed at the factory. It uses the same removable guide rod system to pin them in place as the original M&Ps.

The frame's dust cover is longer to accommodate the longer barrel. There are now three Picatinny slots instead of two. The dust cover length is also the same on the full size M2.0 model.

The M2.0 Compact keeps the rear of the frame the same as the original 40C. There is no projection to protect from "slide bite". That projection has also been removed from the full-size M2.0 frame.

The young clerk showing me the gun in the store commented: "Smith & Wesson is one of the largest gun makers so they can call whatever they want a "compact"." I was amused because of my own classification in the spreadsheet I keep to compare guns. The M2.0 Compact is longer than 7" so it moved up into my full size grouping. Depending on what you are looking for this is not necessarily a bad thing.

The stainless-steel chassis has been extended in the front to reduce flex and torque when firing. The original 40C has slide guide rails that are .41" long both sides front and rear. The M2.0 Compact keeps the same rear dimension but the front is significantly lengthened to 1.07".

The grip has been lengthened so it cannot use the 10 round magazines that came with the original 40C. The original 40C front strap length is about 1.43" (1.7" with the flat floor plate magazine). That's only enough for two fingers for me.. The M2.0 is 2" (2.35" with the magazine). Enough for a full three finger grip for me. Two 13 round magazines with flat floor plates are included.

The 18 degree grip angle is the same and existing 15 round M&P 40 magazines will work. The flat floor plates on the 13 round magazines are smaller than the standard full size 15 round magazines. The contours at the bottom of the grip are different enough between the M2.0 Compact and full size to make this necessary.

Smith & Wesson includes two magazine sleeves to fill the gap and match the contour when using full length 15 round .40 S&W M&P magazines. Those sleeves were a nice surprise because I was getting out the X-Acto knives to trim down the X-Grip adapters I had for full size magazine for the original 40C.

The original Compact with the flat magazine floor plate only provided enough front strap to get a two finger grip. My little finger curled under the mag and provided no assistance for managing recoil. The short grip also lead to several “magazine bites” on my palm.

When I used the original Compact as a carry gun, I had the grip extension on the magazine that was in the gun. That provided the front strap length I wanted and was acceptable for the method of concealed carry I chose.

Coincidentally the front strap on the M2.0 Compact is about the same as the original with the grip extension. The extra grip length is enough to avoid pinching my palm during magazine changes.

The only disadvantage I see in the longer grip is for people who don't use the grip extension on the original Compact. If someone likes the short grip on the original they will probably not like longer grip on the M2.0 Compact.

For those who use the grip extension, the offset for getting three more rounds of .40 S&W is that the heel is now as long. You don't get the taper the original grip extension provided from the front strap to the back strap.

The slide stop now has a detent instead of a spring. When you pull the slide back with a cartridge in the magazine the slide will push the stop down so the slide can travel forward. In the original 40C, the spring pulls the slide stop down out of the way.

According to the marketing from Smith & Wesson the trigger on the M2.0 versions has been improved to provide less travel, less pressure and shorter reset. I was only able to verify one of those three claims. The pull weight dropped from 7 pounds to 5 pounds 2 ounces. I don't modify defensive guns, but people who do, may be satisfied with this improved M2.0 trigger.

The guns weight is 28.1 ounces with an empty 13 round magazine and the M size palm-swell. The original Compact is 25 ounces with an empty 10 round magazine with the flat floor plate and the M size palm-swell.

I like the balance of the M2.0 Compact over the original 40C. The original always seemed top-heavy because of the shorter frame.

What's the same? The magazine release is still reversible.

The trigger still uses the joint that blocks the movement of the trigger until the lower portion is pressed.

The sights are standard three dot in dovetails for drift adjustments.

The takedown mechanism is a lever that gets rotated 90 degrees when the slide is locked back. The disconnect lever under the breech face still needs to be pulled down when the slide is locked back to disengages the sear. This mechanism negates the need to squeeze the trigger during takedown and possibly prevent a negligent discharge by the oblivious.

An ambidextrous thumb safety is still an option. Check the configuration before purchasing to make sure you are getting the feature you want, or don't want.

The slide release is still ambidextrous.

The back of the slide has the same fish scale serrations that make for a positive grip when manipulating the slide.

On the Range: The rough texture of the grip had me a little concerned when I went to the range the first time. I could imagine my skin being shredded. But that did not prove to be a valid concern.

Even with the longer slide, additional weight, and full three finger grip, it is still a .40 cal polymer frame gun. You are going to notice that fact right away. If you are choosing to shoot the .40 S&W over the 9mm Luger you already know what you're going to get. Compared to the original there is less muzzle flip and rise.

The M&P M2.0 40 Compact reliably handled the 165gr and 180gr Winchester full metal jacket target ammo commonly referred to as “white box ammo”. The Federal Aluminum case 180gr ammo fed in and ejected without issue. Winchester 180gr jacketed hollow points worked flawlessly. First 335 rounds, no problems.

Test several brands of self-defense (hollow point) ammunition to be assured of reliable function. You should do that with any gun. This advice is not unique for Smith & Wesson.

In my review of the original M&P 40C back in 2015 I stated: Having only a single firearm will focus your ability to be proficient with it in all situations. This applies to self-defense, and excludes the special needs involved in hunting, sporting or competition shooting. If your purpose is to have a gun for self-defense, in the home and outside the home, the M&P40C could be that one gun for you. I’ll stick with that statement allowing that the longer grip could be a detractor for some carry methods for some people.

The best 3-shot group measured .875” down from the original’s 1.25” at 15 yards. I expected better results over the original because of the longer sight radius, longer barrel and lighter trigger. I got them.

I consider effective range for a gun to be the ability to place 3 unsupported shots on a standard 9” round paper target. I was consistently able to do that at 25 yards. I could probably have gotten a little further but that was the back wall of the range on testing day.

I am very pleased with the changes in the M2.0 version of the M&P Compact. The longer barrel and grip fit my particular space requirements. I prefer the longer grip frame and feel it balances better even with the longer slide. The rougher texture improves grip so I am not constantly having to adjust because the gun is not shifting in my hand shot to shot.

The trigger is a nice upgrade and maintaining the MSRP of \$569 is a plus. Smith & Wesson did not chose to bump up the new version price the way one of their competitors do with each generation.

The package includes the gun, two 13 round magazines, four grip palm swells, two magazine sleeves, Instruction Manual, cable lock, and a black plastic storage box.

- Greg Poole, April 21, 2018