

# Pistol Shooting: The Art (Part 10)

by Edwin C. Hall

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Will you look at this; a double digit part number. Part number, hmm... Sounds like what you use to order a new accessory for your gun. Oh well, enough of that. Let's see, what did I write about last time? Oh, I remember, routines. Have you been working on yours? Of course you have. I shouldn't have asked. This time I'll touch again on routines, add in some subliminal stuff, focus on time away from the range and mention a bit about attitude.

What do you do with all the time spent away from the range? You could delve into all those interrupting items. You know, work, riding to/from work (or elsewhere), waiting around, etc. What if I told you that you should be spending your idle time working on your shooting program? That's right, next time you're sitting around waiting for something and thinking, "What a waste of time!" stop wasting that time. Develop and rehearse mental routines to make good use of those opportunities. You can even do some physical conditioning. I'll mention some starting blocks, but realize that all of this must be tailored to your own program.

The best way to rehearse routines is to actually run through or "visualize" them. This can be done almost everywhere; while waiting for someone before a meeting, sitting around in a waiting room, or during a quiet break from daily activities. In fact, there are some things you can do while you are working.

When you have a chance to just sit back with no immediate worldly attention needed, you can train for shooting by imagining you are shooting. A boring meeting where you might be called upon for input is probably not a good place, but a snack break or lunch time might be. If you have this type of relaxed time, put it to use. Start by thinking about being at the range. Mentally rehearse all the steps taken to perform a perfect shot, all the way through checking it and finding it to be that perfect shot. Never even joke that it might have been less than perfect. All mental practice should be done visualizing perfect results. Perform these exercises whenever time permits. Be sincere. Don't just try; do!

Now that we have some ideas for our relaxed time, where we can afford to pay no direct attention to the "real" world, let's look at some things we can do when only a small amount of attention is needed in the "real" world. There are several physical exercises that can help: (1) Practice holding still while standing. This could be done while waiting in one of those long lines. Notice that to stand motionless, you need to be able to make only very minor corrections in maintaining your balance. (2) Practice your breathing. Mentally go through the range commands and work on your timing so that you exhale to a comfortable hold just before the target turns. (3) Work your fingers in a way that you can gain independent movement between your trigger finger and the rest. Exercise your grip to strengthen it, but isolate your trigger finger so you can gain totally independent control. On to something different...

A vast part of shooting is based on letting our subconscious know what we want and allowing it to create the results. Here we go, that psychological stuff again. As time progresses you will find that we perform about equal to our beliefs in our capabilities. If we believe we can do better, we will. If we believe we're stuck, we are. If we believe we're having problems... How do we use this to our advantage? By first letting our subconscious know what we're searching for, letting it guide us to that

end, and then by knowing we can get those great results.

Here are some things to do to help our inner self focus: (1) If you doodle at work, start doodling 100-10x or at least 100. (2) Draw a picture of a bullseye with 10 hits inside and set it in your desk drawer. (3) Make a screen saver that flashes 100-10x in different locations on your computer. (4) Cut out the center of a target with holes in the X ring and place it somewhere just within view while working. Ok, now that these things are around, what next? Nothing! Just leave them there and forget them. Let them become a natural part of the background. That sounds easy enough, doesn't it? Good, then let's move on.

These were just a few suggestions to start you on your way. I'm sure you can find a limitless supply of creative ways to practice your shooting skills while away from the range. Some can be found by being observant and open-minded to the world around you. Look for common threads between shooting and other sports and then correlations with life in general. The XVIII Winter Olympics were recently held and in every event there could be seen things to put to use in our own sport. Watch for these bits of information in sports and add them to your shooting program.

What were some of those Olympic items? OK, here're a few: (1) In the figure skating events, several of the top skaters fell on some of the opening jumps. They got back up and continued their ROUTINES. They still scored rather well. The score would have been quite different had they stomped around and shown a lack of composure. In fact they probably would have fallen on some of the other jumps. (2) In one of the speed skating events, a skater who was in the lead for the final event, was knocked down by a competitor and just got up and skated off the ice. Had she merely finished the race, she would have been awarded the bronze medal. Since she didn't, she was disqualified. (3) One of the skiers had a spectacular fall in one event and then won gold in others.

The successful events describe a level of mental conditioning important to all sports. The other describes how you can make it worse by giving up when something doesn't go right. Perhaps she didn't know the rules, but even so, she gave up on even being ambitious enough to finish what she started. You must be able to put the bad times out of your mind and continue with your attention on the present. I better head out to the league. See you there?