

Pistol Shooting: The Art (Part 2)

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Well, it looks like they printed another one. Yes, I'm back again with more ramblings. Well let's see, last time I was promoting comfort and consistency. Have you worked on those areas? I think I left you specifically staring at a blank wall as well, yes? No, no, no, you were supposed to be looking at the sights. That's why you were in front of the blank wall. Did you work on your hold against the wall? Have you got it down so that you can close your eyes and lift the pistol up to eye level? When you open your eyes are the sights lined up or is the dot exactly in the middle? If so, good. We're still going to work with an empty gun. I haven't turned you loose with any ammo yet. Now comes the most critical part of shooting. Read close; this is one of those secrets that you will understand in many new ways as time progresses. Remember that jiggle mentioned last time, when you have the sights aligned? That jiggle, the sway, and the alignment of the sights are now of prime importance. The task at hand, a great task indeed, is to bring the trigger straight to the rear without disturbing that jiggle and sway, and without moving the sights out of alignment. This includes keeping the dot in the exact center of the scope.

Let's take the trigger action totally apart. What actually happens when the trigger is manipulated? In some fashion, either a sear is moved so that a hammer can fall and strike a firing pin or the pin is released to travel forward, or some such event. In any case there is a time delay between the trigger releasing and the bullet exiting the barrel. Yes, it is a short delay, but a delay anyway. Anything that happens to the gun during that period will still have an affect on the bullet's path. If the trigger pressure is not straight back, it will affect the pressures on the gun causing a misalignment. If you are trying hard to keep the sights aligned, you will probably compensate for the sights moving out of alignment by using your wrist. You are now pressing one way with the trigger, and the other with your wrist. They are equal, opposite and balanced. However, when the trigger releases, there is an instant where its pressure decreases drastically until it reaches the stop. During this time, your wrist wins the pressure battle. This is where the pistol moves off course. This can very easily be hidden during live fire by the recoil. Then again I haven't suggested any live fire yet, have I? No, I'm still talking blank wall, empty gun and dry fire. This is where the bulk of your training should be. Not even a target, just a blank wall.

So how do you ensure the trigger action is straight back? There are lots of things to look for, but you must be able to recognize them. Again, the best place is in front of your blank wall. Start by practicing that perfect hold you've obtained. Can you hold your sights aligned while you close and open your eyes? If not, you need to work on this. Once you can, the next step is to close your eyes and apply a slight pressure to the trigger. While holding your pressure, open your eyes and see if everything is still aligned. Now release the pressure while watching and see if there is movement. If anything was out of alignment, try this again being very conscious of your effort to bring the trigger straight back. If several attempts are made without success, try repositioning your trigger finger. Once you have this exercise down, practice dry firing watching the alignment and then try to consciously see the gun from another angle, perhaps with your other eye. Try to detect whether the natural movement is disturbed as the hammer falls. Try it with increasingly rapid trigger pulls. Continue practicing until you can literally perform it with your eyes closed.

Remember that trigger manipulation is the most important aspect of pistol shooting. If your hold is a

little shaky it will give you wide groups. If your sights are misaligned you will have wide hits. If your trigger is misused it can take you off the backer. The trigger can be considered 95% of the importance. Good trigger control will give you 95% of your score. All those other parts of the sport will give you the other 5%.

Well, let's see, I still promoted using a blank wall with no target. I also highlighted finding a way to manipulate the trigger so that the hammer can fall without disturbing all that natural movement. Then I mentioned how important the trigger is. That should leave you with enough to work on till next time. So long for now. I'm heading back out to the league.