

# Pistol Shooting: The Art (Part 8)

by Edwin C. Hall

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Yep, I'm still submitting these inputs to the editor and he is still using them. Thank you to those who have given me feedback. If you were a little confused back with parts 4 and 5, that's all right, so was I when I saw them printed. Just go back and relabel the dates on your two newsletters and it will work out fine.

I'm going to hit on two areas in particular this time. The first will again be the trigger. Did I mention how important the trigger is? The second will be in the mental arena. Specifically on being more positive. This is an area I'm trying to work more diligently with, myself. On to the first item at hand.

A good trigger action can be given credit for all the good shots. I'm not including all the shots that hit the center. Some of these land there because of odds and averages. If you point the gun downrange and spray several shots, some will occasionally score. The ones that look good, feel good, and hit correctly are the ones I am referring to. These are the result of proper trigger action.

Most of us will agree that we can pick a gun up, align the sights and then hold them in that alignment pretty still. But, what happens at the instant we initiate trigger action? For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Remember that from school? If you have a totally steady, perfectly aligned sight picture, it will move slightly. The further the trigger action diverges from straight back, the further the off-center move. The tendency when this occurs is to stop the trigger because the sight picture isn't perfect anymore. Let's follow this improper activity through the breaking of a shot.

For this description let's say that our trigger breaks at 4 pounds and each pull will add .5 pounds with no lessening. We start with perfect sights and initiate the trigger. (trigger increased to .5 lbs) The picture changed so we stopped. (trigger still at .5 lbs) We corrected the picture and started again. (trigger increased to 1.0 lbs) The alignment shifted so again we stopped. (trigger now at 1.0 lbs) Continue in the same way to 3.5 lbs... (trigger is at 3.5 lbs) The picture moved, etc. We have everything aligned again and initiate the trigger one more time. (trigger increases to 4.0 lbs) "Darn! The shot went off just at the instant it moved out of the black. It was a surprise shot! I didn't know which of those little extra pulls was going to make it go off!"

Now let's try to describe a good shot. The sight picture is nearly correct as we settle so we initiate the trigger action. The sight picture is disturbed, but we correct it without stopping the trigger momentum. As the pressure increases we work at keeping the sights aligned. "Wow! That went off before I expected it to."

If you take note of the difference in lengths of the above two paragraphs, you can correlate it to the difference in time required for each type of shot. You really do have an easier time with good shots. Now that I've covered the trigger for about half of this month's entry, let's move on to the second subject.

The mental arena is really where the whole event takes place. This time I'm going to hit on being positive and focusing on the good shots. For some reason we tend to be proud of our bad shots. We want

to highlight them: "Wow! Look at how that shot spread across the paper when it hit the frame." or "Darn! It could have been a good target, but I shot a six." These shots are interesting, but we need to put our focus on what we want, not what we don't want.

What can we do to move toward the positive side? One suggestion is to approach the target in a positive way. First pick out a scoring ring to work with based on your shooting average. Pick the first ring with five or fewer shots within it. "Within it" of course meaning that ring or higher. Let's say it's the eight ring. Now that we have a ring established, shoot some strings. Do not check the hits for score between shots! Instead concentrate on initiating the trigger and aligning the sights. After we finish ten rounds we can look for values.

Now, down to the targets. Score your neighbor and then verify your score, but don't really keep note of the total. Now, first thing, cover any holes not on the face. Don't glorify them, even if they're a scientific miracle! Now count up how many are within the ring you chose to work with. Keep that number in mind; "I got 5 within the eight ring." Don't put any qualifiers on them. Don't say "...only 5..." or "...barely 5..." Just take note of how many were within and remember that to average five some will be less as well as more. Only concern yourself with how many are within.

While you're firing, don't try to shoot within your ring. Try only to have a smooth continuous trigger, initiated only once per shot, just prior to concentrating on your sight alignment. Expect your shots to be good. Look for them to be in the center. Once you consistently get more than 5 within whatever ring you're working with, move up a ring.

In becoming more positive, we need to throw out some of those favorite things we say. You know the ones, "That's just the way I shoot. I can't do any better. I just can't figure it out. I always have to have two bad shots." If we drill these into our subconscious, we're obliged to keep them true. Can you shoot a ten? Yes! Know this and hold that knowledge that you can shoot a ten. Know that you can do it over and over. Mentally you must stay ahead of where you are. To be better, you must believe you already are better. Don't let anybody, especially yourself, tell you that you're not.

Looks like the league is about to begin again. Guess I'll go see if you've shown up. Maybe you can help me work on those positive thoughts. I can always use help. Hope to see you there.