

# **BASIC SHOOTING DRILLS FOR THOSE NEW TO ACTION PISTOL SHOOTING**

## **CORRECTING TRIGGER SLAP**

Shooters moving from slow fire to rapid fire often move their trigger fingers all the way off the trigger between shots. This has a couple of negative effects. First, it takes time. Second, it leads to inaccuracy because the tendency is to slap the trigger on the second and subsequent shots.

To fix this, follow through on your shots with your trigger finger. Hold the trigger back all the way through recoil. When the sights are again aligned slowly release the trigger until the link re-engages. Then press to make the next shot.

Once you know how far to release the trigger of your gun, both accuracy and speed improve.

## **CONSECUTIVE PAIRS**

Teaches: shot-to-shot follow through, visual and kinesthetic awareness.

Shooters moving from slow-fire to rapid-fire often have trouble keeping the gun controlled, or keeping a precise sight picture. This exercise is designed to smooth out your shot-to-shot transitions.

### **Drill:**

To isolate the mechanics of follow through, don't set up a target. Instead, fire into the berm. This will prevent you from looking forward past the gun to see your shot placement. As long as the shots will be stopped by the backstop, we don't care where they go. If shooting at an indoor range, set up a target large and close enough that it will catch your fire easily.

Load a full magazine or cylinder, and with a good sight alignment (sights aligned, but not aimed at anything in particular), carefully fire one shot into the berm. Watch the front sight move through the arc of recoil and return to alignment, and fire a quick follow up shot. Pay attention to how the gun feels while shooting, and make sure you aren't shifting your grip or lifting your finger off the trigger between shots. You are

letting the gun show you how to fire it smoothly, letting it rise and snap back into alignment until it does this all by itself, as if it were spring-loaded. Watch the front sight, and don't worry about hitting a target--you're just learning how to make your shots feel connected and continuous.

If something feels wrong, freeze the gun and look at what you are doing. Look especially at your grip, your trigger finger, and where your visual focus is. Correct it, pay attention to it, and keep shooting.

Repeat this drill for a half hour, and you will have a lot more awareness of how the gun fires and returns to the target. Come back to this drill whenever you find yourself having trouble with follow through mechanics.

## **ACCELERATED PAIRS**

Teaches: Top-speed accurate fire.

Requires: High (or close) backstop.

Some shooters get hung up on the difference between double-taps (a.k.a. "hammers"--two shots fired from one sight picture) and accelerated pairs (two shots, each with a sight picture). This exercise will help you sort out the difference and realize that sighted pairs can be as fast as unsighted ones. The trick is in teaching your eye to follow the front sight through recoil and make an instantaneous verification of the sight picture.

You might be shooting more slowly than you need to. The gun is in battery and back on the target very quickly, but many shooters add time checking the sight picture. This exercise will help you realize that your body can shoot the gun very quickly once your eye knows what to see.

Drill: First, be sure of your backstop. You may get some very high shots in the first portion of the drill--make sure they will be caught.

With an IPSC target or other large cardboard target three feet from the muzzle of the gun, fire a double-tap as quickly as you physically can. Watch the *target*, not the sights, during both shots. You should be able to see your rounds go through the cardboard. Don't worry about the sight picture, just see how quickly you can manage the trigger and still feel like the gun is under control. Repeat at least 10 times.

After shooting enough top-speed pairs to have a feeling of consistency, slow down enough to bring your shots within a hand's-breadth of each other on your target. Taping a 4x6 card to the target might help. Tape the target after every pair.

When you are consistently firing target-focus double-taps within four inches or so of each other, switch to watching the front sight. Follow the sight through the arc of recoil, and visually verify the sight picture as the second shot breaks. But don't let this slow the shot. You will see that an aimed shot can be fired in the same amount of time as an unaimed one. If you are visually following the front sight through recoil, sight verification is instantaneous.

### **Diagnostics**

If you have trouble seeing what the sight does during recoil, you may be blinking. Otherwise, your eye is seeing *something* during the recoil cycle of the gun--pay attention to what it is. Some people see the top of the gun or ejection port; some people watch the muzzle flash or the flash in the chamber. Lower the gun a bit so you see a tall front sight and just watch what the front sight does in recoil for a while. Follow the sight while looking *over* the gun first, then learn to follow it from a conventional sight picture.

### **BILL DRILL (after Bill Wilson)**

Teaches: draw, grip, rapid-fire, recoil control, "adequate" rather than "perfect" sight picture.

With one IPSC target 7 yards away, start from surrender position, draw, and fire 6 shots into the A-zone. If any shots miss the A-zone, the time does not count, so the emphasis is on accuracy before speed.

Brian Enos puts master-level time for this Drill as 2.0 seconds.

### **Variations for a Beginner**

Bring the target as close as 8 feet, or start from low ready instead of holstered.

Shoot as fast as you can while keeping the shots in the A-zone and keeping a feeling of control over the gun. The point is to get used to the feeling of controlled rapid fire, learning to watch the sight, and familiarizing yourself with rapid-fire recoil

characteristics.

Drawing from the holster helps you to learn to acquire a good shooting grip; otherwise the gun will start to feel out of control.

If you are missing the A-zone, you're making mistakes. SLOW DOWN and do it right.

This Drill can be a real ammo burner.

## **MOZAMBIQUE DRILL**

Intended as a failure drill -- when two shots to the body do not seem to stop the attacker.

### **Setup**

Single silhouette target distance based on shooter's skill level. (Start at 3 to 5 yards and work out as skill develops.)

### **Procedure**

Start facing the target. On the signal, draw and fire two shots to Center Of Mass and then one to the head. Score per appropriate sport rules, though there must be a head shot. Lack of a head shot is considered a miss.

*"The problem for the shooter is to change his pace, going just as fast as he can with his first pair, then, pausing to observe results or lack thereof, he must slow down and shoot precisely. This is not easy to do. The beginner tends to fire all three shots at the same speed, which is either too slow for the body shots or too fast for the head shot. This change of pace calls for concentration and coordination which can only be developed through practice." -- Jeff Cooper in Jeff Cooper's Commentaries*

## **Multiple Target Drill - Tom Givens**

### **Targets**

IDPA/ISPC

### **Stage Procedure**

1. Facing T1 at 3 yards. From the holster, draw and fire a "double tap" 2 rounds in 2

seconds. ( Perform 6 times for a total of 12 rounds.)

**2.** Facing T2 at 5 yards. Begin facing 90 degrees right or left. At the Signal, pivot, then draw and fire 2 rounds in 3 seconds. Do three Times facing to the right and three times facing to the left. (Perform 6 times for a total of 12 rounds.)

**3.** Facing T1 at 3 yards and T2 at 5 yards. At the signal, draw and fire A “double tap” on each target, 4 rounds in 4 seconds. (Perform 3 times For a total of 12 rounds.)

**4.** Facing T1 at 3 yards and T2 at 5 yards. At the signal, draw and fire a “double tap” on each target, followed by a single shot to the head of each target, 6 rounds in 8 seconds. (Perform 2 times for a total of 12 rounds.)

**5.** Facing T1 at 5 yards and T2 at 7 yards. At the signal, draw and fire a Single head shot on each target, 2 rounds in 5 seconds.

50 total rounds fired (25 on each target). Each hit in the primary scoring zone scored as 2 points each.