Bullseye Pistol Shooting

Shooting Well

Several factors under your direct control affect the score you shoot:

1. Body position
2. Grip on the Pistol
3. Sight picture
4. Breathing
5. Trigger squeeze
6. Follow-through

Body position and the way the pistol is held are of vital importance to firing a good score. In the beginning both may seem awkward but practice will eliminate that feeling. Although a standard position and grip are described here, many variations appear as a shooter gains experience and adapt the principals to his own body. Comfort is the most important consideration; it makes possible the relaxation and concentration

1. Body Position

Establish a natural Point of Aim: Your body should be turned sixty to ninety degrees from the target with your feet spread comfortably (about shoulder distance apart) and pointing straight forward. Your weight should be evenly distributed, knees straight; neither bent nor stiff. After the grip on the pistol is taken, the off- hand should be put somewhere where it is comfortable and is immobilized (i.e. doesn't just hang). Place it in a pocket or under your waistband at the small of your back. Having this arm hanging (and swinging) will cause your extended arm to swing from side to side.

The arm holding the gun should be extended full length with your elbow locked and your body and head comfortably erect. Correct foot position may be found by pointing your index finger at the target and rotating the extended shooting arm in a small circular pattern. Stop the motion of the arm when it feels comfortable- it's the natural position. Look at the target. If the hand is pointed at the target, a natural point of aim has been established. (if not pointing at the center of the target). Repeat the exercise and shift the feet as necessary.

2a. Gripping the firearm

The importance of the hand position on the grip of a pistol cannot be overemphasized. Although the grip construction of the revolver and the self-loader are different, the gripping procedure is essentially the same. The hand should be as high on the grip as is allowed by the rear extension of the frame on the self-loader and the hammer spur of the revolver.

Use the non-shooting hand to place the pistol in the grip of the shooting hand. The "V" formed by the thumb and the first finger of the shooting hand is then fitted as high as possible on the grip. The heel of the hand is solidly behind the grip so the gun will recoil straight back.

2a. Continued

The index finger should **not** be placed on the trigger but should lie on the side of the frame or on the outside of the trigger guard. The thumb rests along the frame. Using the thumb of the non-shooting hand on the spur of the hammer, pull the hammer back all the way to the rear until it locks in place.

2b. Gripping the Self-loader

When taking the grip on the self-loader, the first finger is extended along the frame outside the trigger guard. It is **not** put on the trigger until the sights are on the target. The thumb lies horizontally along the frame just below the slide. The other fingers are placed firmly around the grip.

With either type of pistol, it is important not to squeeze the grip too tightly as this will cause shaking. By wrapping the fingers firmly around the grip and applying light pressure, the checkering on the grip will maintain the gun's position in your hand.

3a. Sight Alignment

The new shooter's first objective is to learn to put shots together into a group regardless of scores or bullseye. A number of elements are involved in this feat but proper sight picture and sight alignment are basic to this skill. The rear sight, the front sight, and the target are involved. When proper sight picture and alignment have been achieved the shot must be fired without disturbing it. Overemphasis on sight picture sometimes causes had alignment. Both are important.

3b. Sight Picture

The aiming point is at the bottom of the Bullseye. This aiming point is known as the "six o'clock hold" (six o'clock on an imaginary clock face). Many shooters use a center aiming point (the center of the Bullseye) but the six o'clock hold is recommended for the beginner and all the guns provided are sighted for that.

Both eyes should be kept open if possible. This results in more available light and better depth perception. The stronger eye will still control aiming. Many good shooters close one eye but the new shooter would do well to make every attempt to use both.

It is important to focus on the front sight. The front sight should appear sharp and the rear sight should appear a little less so. The target should look blurred. Between shots, you should not look down range to see where the shots have gone, your eyes cannot near, then far and near again well enough to give the best focus on the sights.

You will not be able to hold your gun entirely motionless; this is a situation that can never be completely overcome. Practice helps to condition the arm and shoulder muscles and helps cut down the area over which the sights move. Gripping too tightly or failure to rest between shots causes excessive movement. Practice your hold when possible. A reasonable substitute is to use a milk jug which is partially filled with water; this is then held in the usual shooting position for periods which are slightly longer than the gun would normally be held.

4. Breath Control

Proper breathing plays an important role in accurate shooting. Ships, tanks and planes have complex systems to compensate for movement of the gun platform. The individual shooter helps stop the movement of the platform by controlled breathing.

Ordinarily the shot will be fired in a few seconds and no difficulty from lack of oxygen should result. However, if the breath is held too long, muscle tremors will begin. If this happens, the shooter should lower the gun to the rest position and start over.

5. Trigger Squeeze

Trigger squeeze is very important. The trigger finger is tightened steadily on the trigger until the gun fires. The rest of the hand should maintain its regular grip on the pistol. Even if the sights waver on the target, the steady increase of pressure should continue. You should not know when the pistol is going to fire; it should be a bit of a surprise. Jerked triggers always mean disappointing hits.

"Dry firing" helps develop good trigger control. It amounts to going through all the motions of firing with an empty gun. There is no recoil and no flinching. A little practice every day is superior to longer practice.

THE SHOOTER MUST KNOW THE PISTOL IS UNLOADED before starting dry firing practice. You must still observe proper safety precautions when dry firing. **Never point a gun in an unsafe direction** and it is recommended that you practice dry firing in an area where no ammunition is present.

Flinching and jerking the trigger often go together. A partner can help by loading the gun with some live rounds and some "snap caps" (dummy rounds) so that the shooter doesn't know which shots will actually fire.

Assuming that proper sight picture and alignment exist, the shooter's problem is to fire the gun without altering them. Several factors, aside from the movement of the arm in its extended position, must be considered. They are trigger control, breathing follow-through and rhythm. It is difficult to say which of these is the most important. The new pistol shooter should simply understand that each is important and that each has an effect on where the bullet hits. None may be done poorly.

6. Follow Through

Follow through is patience. It means holding the sight picture and squeezing the trigger through the actual firing and for 2 or 3 seconds afterward. The gun should not be lowered as soon as the shot is fired. Haste here may ruin the shot. Follow through also helps to slow down and steady the shooter.

7. Sight Adjustment

Sights should be changed only after shots are grouping consistently regardless of the location of the group. The new shooter should fire at least 20 rounds to establish a group. Target sights are frequently micrometer sights and can be adjusted.

The standard rule for sight adjustment is, "Move the rear sight in the same direction the holes on the target should move". Vertical adjustment of the sight is called a correction in elevation. Horizontal adjustment is called a correction in windage.

8. Calling the shot

When the gun fires, though the shooter should not know when that will be, a mental picture of the sight alignment in relation to the Bullseye will tell the shooter where the bullet should hit. Failure to hit where it should means poor sight alignment, jerking, flinching or something else that needs correction.

The Correction Chart can help analyze poor shooting results.

9. Rhythm

From the time the gun is raised until it is lowered the same relative amount of time should be used for each phase of the firing process each time it is done. Development of rhythm in slow-fire will make it much easier to achieve in timed and rapid-fire.

10. Timed and Rapid Fire

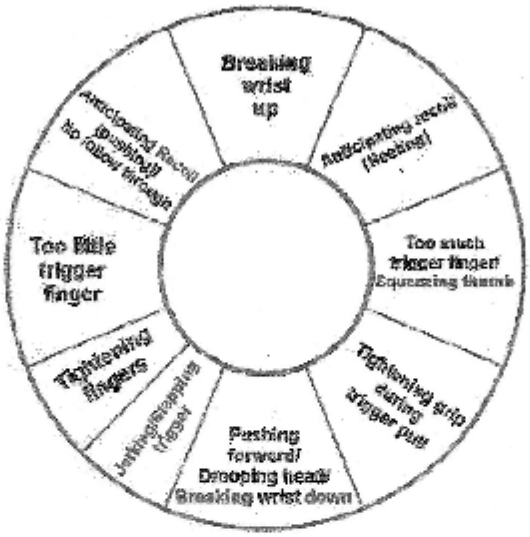
Timed and rapid-fire are simply a matter of speeding up what you have done during slow-fire. EVERYTHING FUNDAMENTAL TO GOOD SLOW-FIRE SHOOTING MUST BE DONE IN THE FASTER PHASES. The only difference is that each element is even more important.

There are several new elements which must be considered in timed and rapid-fire. A somewhat tighter grip may be required to prevent your grip shifting in recoil. A high hold on the grip is even more important since it will reduce the movement of the muzzle in recoil and decrease the time necessary to get on target. Rhythm is absolutely essential. Shots fired with smooth even timing mean better scores and getting all the shots within the allotted time.

11. Cocking the Pistol

A smooth cocking motion is very important to quick realignment of revolver sights in timed and rapid-fire. After each shot is fired, the fingers should continue to hold the same. The thumb of the shooting hand is placed on the hammer spur. The hammer is drawn back to full cock and the thumb again placed along the frame above the cylinder latch. The sights may then be aligned as soon as the thumb is out of the way. The arm is kept at full extension and the eyes kept on the target throughout the cocking operation. The “straight back” method of cocking described above is not the only way but it is probably the best for the beginner.

Right Handed Pistol Correction Chart



Left Handed Pistol Correction Chart