



**FIREARMS TRAINING INSTITUTE**



**Practice Guide**  
*Practical Rifle*

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ISBN 978-0-9711266-1-9

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## Disclaimer

This Practice Guide is not intended as a substitute for the safe and professional instruction provided in Front Sight's Practical Rifle Course.

**THIS IS NOT A TRAINING MANUAL. FRONT SIGHT STRONGLY ADVISES YOU AGAINST PRACTICING THE TECHNIQUES IN THIS PRACTICE GUIDE UNLESS YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE FOUR DAY PRACTICAL RIFLE COURSE AT FRONT SIGHT.**

Front Sight assumes no liability for any damages or negligence that may occur through the use of this Practice Guide.

Students wishing to pursue training should contact Front Sight at (800) 987-7719 or [www.frontsight.com](http://www.frontsight.com).

Front Sight recommends that all procedures and techniques mentioned in this guide be performed at a proper firing range under carefully controlled conditions. By using this guide, the reader accepts the responsibility for any and all accidents, damage or injuries that might occur.

## PART ONE

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## The Purpose of This Practice Guide

At Front Sight, our goal is to make you as good as we possibly can during the time you spend with us. That, however, is only part of the process to gaining lasting skills in gun-handling, marksmanship, and tactics, and establishing a combat mindset. When you leave Front Sight, it becomes your responsibility to practice the techniques you learned during your course at Front Sight.

To assist you in your continued practice, we have created this guide. It reviews many of the techniques taught in the 4-Day Practical Rifle Course. This guide is more than just a “dry practice” review. Many of the described techniques, such as malfunctions and reloads, involve a loaded weapon. Such techniques cannot be practiced safely during dry practice and must be practiced only at a proper firing range under carefully controlled “live-fire” conditions.

Practice diligently; practice often; and by all means — practice CORRECTLY!

## The Four Universal Firearms Safety Rules

### **Rule 1: Treat every weapon as if it were loaded.**

Dry practice means practicing with an unloaded weapon to polish the skills and techniques learned on the range. Even during dry practice, treat the weapon with the same respect as a loaded weapon. That respect, or mindset, generally prevents any negligent discharge that might otherwise occur. A negligent discharge means firing a round that you didn't anticipate firing.

### **Rule 2: Never let the muzzle cover anything you are not willing to destroy.**

Usually, if you violate Rule 2 what you end up covering is yourself. You end up covering your hand, your leg, or some other body part. You need to be what we call “muzzle conscious.” Know where that muzzle is pointing all the time and never point it at anything you do not intend to shoot.

### **Rule 3: Keep your finger off the trigger until you're ready to fire.**

When you are pointed in at your target and have made the decision to shoot, ONLY THEN is your finger on the trigger. Any other time the trigger finger is resting on the reference point.

### **Rule 4: Be sure of your target and what's inline with your target.**

On the shooting range your target is generally a flat sheet of paper. No one is in the foreground because everyone is on the same firing line. There is nothing behind the target except a large berm to absorb the impact of the rounds. On

the street, Rule 4 is significantly more complicated. Several questions need to be answered. First, are you about to shoot the correct individual? If the answer is yes, then is someone going to step in front of your sights? And finally, if you press the trigger and that round over penetrates right through your adversary and continues downrange, what's it going to strike downrange? It goes without saying that once you have fired that shot you cannot alter it's course and you certainly can't get it back. You need to be absolutely certain of Rule 4 before you press the trigger.

## The Five Levels of Competence

**Intentionally Incompetent:** Believe it or not, there are those who own and carry firearms that clearly know of their incompetence, but lack even the slightest bit of courage or motivation to improve their skills. The **II** avoids training out of laziness and fear of further exposing his incompetence to others. Graveyards are filled with the **II**. Sadly, the **II** often take those who count on them most — partners, family, and team members — to the grave with him. Unfortunately, the **II** cannot be helped to any substantial degree due to his lack of motivation to retain any training. Time wasted by coddling the **II** is better spent on the student who wants to improve. Fortunately, we rarely see the **II** at Front Sight.

**Unconsciously Incompetent:** The **UI** does not know that he does not know. The **UI** represents approximately 95% of all gun owners and includes people, for example in the police and military, who carry a gun for a living. The **UI** is incompetent but does not know he is incompetent because he has had no training or poor training, and has not yet experienced a tactical situation, which would clearly demonstrate his inadequacies. Examples of the **UI** can be found everywhere. The police officer who boasts that he has never had to draw his pistol in 10 years of duty is a lucky **UI**. The officer who only practices shooting his weapon a few times per year in order to pass the mandatory range qualifications is **UI**. The gun owner who buys a gun and box of ammo, fires a few shots at the range and then places the gun in his closet, confident he can use it effectively to protect himself is **UI**. The hunter who only shoots once a year to sight-in his rifle before going hunting is **UI**. Military personnel who receive basic rifle training, but have not handled a weapon **with live ammunition** in over six months are **UI**. Unfortunately, the **UI** often learns of his ineptitude for the first time under the most extreme stress situations. When the flag flies, the **UI**'s first lesson may be his last.

**Consciously Incompetent:** If the UI survives his first lesson, and is smart enough to place the blame on the man in the mirror, the UI automatically graduates to the level of CI. The CI now knows he does not know and seeks help in acquiring the proper skills in the use of his weapon. The CI is a motivated student of weaponscraft. Although the CI is still operating at a level of incompetence, the CI recognizes his faults and in doing so can focus his efforts toward reaching a level of competency.

**Consciously Competent:** With proper training and practice, the CI develops into the CC. The length of time needed to develop from CI to CC is directly related to the quality of the training and the motivation of the student. The CC is able to manipulate his weapon and clear malfunctions in a safe and efficient manner. The CC understands the principles of marksmanship, shot placement and ammunition management. Quick assumption of field positions and the use of cover are familiar concepts to the CC. The CC has adopted the combat mind set as his own. As the level indicates, the CC is very quick and competent, but must constantly think about what he is doing. Every decision and action occurs as a result of an intricate thought process and has not yet reached a reflex response level. The CC will respond effectively to most stress situations that do not require split second decisions or actions.

**Unconsciously Competent:** As the fifth and ultimate level of competence implies, the UC has programmed his mind and body after thousands of repetitions to react in a fraction of a second with consistent responses that require no perceivable thought process. The UC functions flawlessly even under stressful situations because the UC's extensive training overrides his conscious thought process. As you can imagine, the UC is not common in today's society. This sad fact is due more to lack of proper training than to lack of motivation. Here are a few examples of the UC in action. In the heat of a gun battle, a pistolero hears a "click" as his hammer falls on a defective round. He reflexively taps the magazine, rack-flips the action and delivers two rounds into

his adversary's chest without consciously recognizing that his gun had malfunctioned. Upon sighting a trophy, a hunter slings up as he drops into a steady sitting position. He fires, manipulates the bolt on recoil — without the rifle leaving his shoulder or his eyes leaving the game — producing a one-shot kill and he does it all in less time than it takes to read this sentence. The combat shotgunner, confronted with a rapidly deteriorating hostage situation at 10 yards, immediately aims his front sight at the outside ear of the gunman, then confidently delivers half of the shotgun's pattern to the gunman's head.

At Front Sight we take motivated people, conscious of their inadequacies or not, and develop their minds and bodies to a level of competence that transcends 95% of the people who carry firearms for a living. For those who are already competent, Front Sight will challenge your abilities and elevate your competence to the unconscious plane.

## Practical Rifle Discussion

### Any Gun Will Do...

As Front Sight's motto indicates, your weapon is just a tool. However, some tools are better than others and it is comforting to have good equipment. We are often asked by the prospective student if any modifications should be made to enhance a rifle's function. We point out that in terms of modification, less is better. A practical rifle (as in one uses the gun for self-defense) does not need all the extra hardware and modifications that might be found on competition guns.

A practical rifle is one that will get hand span sized groups in the thoracic cavity from close contact to 200 yards without the shooter having to worry about sight adjustments, holdovers, or anything else. Any rifle can be a practical rifle; the following information can guide you on what to look for in a practical rifle.

The following are four popular calibers used in a variety of rifles. There are advantages and disadvantages to each caliber, so a determination on your part on what you want the rifle for will help with your choice of caliber.

- 5.56mm (.223 Remington): Used in AR-15, Mini-14, some AK type weapons, and bolt action rifles. Effective out to around 400 to 500 yards. Good self-defense round. Designed to tumble and fragment on impact, lessening the chance of over-penetration of your target and your home. Good light game round.
- 7.62x39mm: Used in Mini-30, SKS and AK type rifles. Heavy .30 caliber round on a short case. Effective out to around 200 yards. Can over-penetrate your target and building materials. Good light to medium game round.

- 7.62x51mm (.308): Used in M14/M1A, FAL, H&K, and bolt action rifles. Effective out to around 800 yards. Can over-penetrate your target and building materials. Good light to medium game round.
- .30-30: Used mainly in lever action type rifles. Effective out to around 200 yards. Good light to medium game round. This round is included because no matter how gun laws change, you will probably be able to walk into any sporting goods type store and find .30-30 ammunition.

Some feel that full power, large-caliber cartridges are too difficult to control. Lack of recoil control when shooting is due to poor gun handling—not due to cartridge power. A proper stance and grip will allow even the frail to effectively control the muzzle. If you doubt it, spend a weekend with us at Front Sight and your doubts will vanish as your gun handling improves.

These are the three main action types:

- Semi-automatic. When a shot is fired, the rifle automatically ejects the spent casing and loads a new round into the chamber.
- Bolt Action. When a shot is fired, the shooter must manually run the bolt to eject the spent casing and load a new round into the chamber.
- Lever Action. Instead of running a bolt, the shooter is running a lever which ejects the spent casing and the new round is released from the magazine tube on the downstroke, and then is chambered on the upstroke.

**Remember—it is the shooter and not the gun (or cartridge) that does the shooting. A UC with a bolt gun is a great deal deadlier than a UI with an AK-47.**



Once you've determined what caliber and action type you want, the next step is to determine what rifle has the right ergonomics for you. The rifle should be of reasonable weight, and balanced at the center or towards the stock to allow ease of presentation and movement. A heavy front end means more effort expended to bring the rifle on target. It should fit comfortably when presented, (length of pull), with all the controls (safety, magazine release, etc.) easy to reach and manipulate. The stock can be made of wood, metal, or synthetic material. Similarly, it can be fixed or collapsible.

When choosing a rifle, pay particular attention to the trigger and the sights. The trigger should be crisp and clean, and release at 4 to 8 pounds. Lighter triggers should be avoided for a self-defense weapon. The sights should be easy to use, such as large aperture (ghost ring) type sights. Match type sights with very small apertures should be avoided in a self-defense weapon. They are not as effective as ghost ring sights when dealing with low light, multiple, and moving targets.

If you are planning on mounting optics to your rifle, do your homework and buy a top quality scope, rings, and mounts. Scopes up to 4 power are ideal for a practical rifle. Since you are likely to need your practical rifle in low-light conditions, select a scope with an illuminated reticle. However, it would be best if that reticle does not use a battery. It should be able to withstand rough handling, and be simple to use. The mounting system should either allow you to look through the mount, or be of a quick release variety, so when something happens to the scope, you can use your iron sights quickly. If you decide to go with optics, you should also invest in some type of cover or caps to protect the lenses when they are not being used.

Some other accessories that you may consider are:

- **Bipod.** A bipod is useful for cleaning and storage and gives you increased stability in the prone

position. It also increases the weight of the front end or be too fragile for field use. A bipod may also change your point of impact.

- **Flashlight.** A home defense rifle should have a flashlight attached to it. The flashlight can be dedicated to the rifle or a hand-held light that can be mounted to the weapon with little or no modification to the rifle.
- **Sling.** Any type of sling in a home defense situation can be problematic. Slings are very handy however when working in open areas or if you need both hands free for another task.
  - The simplest sling is the carry strap. It allows you to sling the weapon and move with it, but you must maintain control of the weapon at all times. It can provide some support for a shooting position (i.e. hasty sling).
  - A Military or Competition Loop Sling will also allow you to transport the weapon, and when used properly, provides excellent support for a shooting position. The downside is that the military sling takes time to get in to and out of the loop, and once you are in it, you are attached to the weapon and have very limited, if any, use of your support hand.
  - The "Ching Sling" provides the best balance between a simple carry strap and a military loop sling. It provides good support for a shooting position, and is easy to get in to and out of. However, the Ching Sling also ties up the support hand when it is being used. Some Ching Slings require three attachment points on the rifle.

- The tactical sling provides a way to carry the weapon and have both hands free if needed. It can provide some support for a shooting position.
- **Cleaning Equipment.** There should be no need to detail clean a practical rifle during the course, but you will want to make sure that the chamber and bore are kept relatively clean and dry, and that the bolt is kept lubricated. A basic cleaning kit of toothbrush, rod, eye, patches, nylon bore brush, chamber brush and boresnake along with something like Break Free™ Cleaner, Lubricant and Preservative (CLP) will help keep your gun running during a practical rifle course.

## Dry Practice Procedures

Strictly adhering to the procedures described below will allow you to safely practice with your weapon when you leave the range.

A few definitions are needed for clarity:

***Dry Practice:***

Describes a practice session or exercise not involving ammunition. The weapon is completely unloaded. Note that we do not use the term "dry fire" as you cannot fire an unloaded weapon and when calling out a range command we do not want any confusion between dry practice and firing the weapon.

***Live Fire:***

Describes a practice session or exercise using ammunition. **The weapon is loaded.**

***Negligent Discharge:***

The act of firing the weapon unintentionally.

Notice that the words "accident" and "accidental discharge" have been purposely avoided because they imply a sense of chance or lack of control. A weapons fires only when the handler presses the trigger—there is no element of chance involved. In our many years associated with weapons, we have never seen a gun of any kind fire by itself. The handler may not intend to fire a round, but he is responsible for it regardless of his intentions. The term "negligent discharge" more accurately places the responsibility where it belongs.

We are well advised to practice the skills we learned on the range. You cannot significantly improve your shooting skills through additional shooting and often the more you shoot, the worse you shoot. Your skill with firearms is maintained and improved through **CORRECT DRY PRACTICE**. The importance of dry practice cannot be overstated.

Homes, apartments, and hotels are clearly poor places for a bullet to unintentionally escape from the muzzle, yet because of convenience, these are the places we most commonly dry practice. The following system will allow you to safely conduct dry practice anywhere.

The three main elements of safe dry practice are:

- Proper mind set
- Control of your environment, and
- Separation from ammunition

**Proper Mind Set:** Because safety lies between the ears and not with mechanical devices, proper mindset is crucial to safe dry practice. Realize that handling weapons can be disastrous if the handler's attention is elsewhere. Dry practice must be conducted in a structured, serious fashion. Often as familiarity increases, so does complacency. This gives rise to many seasoned shooters having negligent discharges. Some people believe that if you handle weapons long enough you will eventually have a negligent discharge. We strongly disagree. There is no reason, other than negligence, that you will unintentionally fire a round. If you treat dry practice with the respect it demands, you will never feel the helpless agony associated with tracing the path of the round that you did not want to fire or have to utter the hollow excuse, "I didn't mean to shoot."

**Control of Your Environment:** For safe dry practice you must have control of your immediate environment so you can eliminate all possible distractions. If you don't have control of your environment, don't dry practice until you do.

In preparation for dry practice:

- Turn off the television and stereo
- Take the telephone off the hook
- Close the drapes
- Send the family on an errand

This distraction-free environment will help result in safe and productive practice. Part of your practice environment is obviously the target.

- Construct a target specifically for dry practice. The target should be used for dry practice only and should be removed immediately when you have finished practicing. Don't use part of the building (doors, mirrors, or light switches) or its furnishings (televisions, pictures, computers) because these items may tempt you to practice your presentation "just one more time" after you have quit your dry practice session and have holstered the weapon. This sounds unbelievable, but is the most common reason for negligent discharges.
- Select a simple target, such as a piece of white paper cut to a desired size. If you want to simulate shooting at longer distances within the confines of your home, reduce the size of the target. For added precaution, tape your target to something capable of stopping, or at least slowing, a bullet. A brick or cinder block wall is ideal.
- At the conclusion of the practice session, remove the target to avoid the "just one more time" syndrome described above. Some people advocate dry practicing in conjunction with watching television as the characters in the program serve as targets and the scene change is your start signal. This is bad business (except for the television repair man) because the person practicing tends to shift his attention to the television, thereby diluting his concentration and losing control of his immediate environment. The television also remains as a tempting target after the dry practice session is over. Many televisions have been destroyed in this process. Besides, the thin veneers of glass and plastic that comprise a television do not make a good bullet stop.

**Separation from Ammunition:** Physical separation from your ammunition supply is mandatory to ensure a safe dry practice session. Unload your weapon AND yourself. This includes

- The chamber
- All magazines and speed loaders
- Ammunition carrying devices such as butt cuffs on long guns
- Your pockets

Place all the ammunition in a container such as an ammo can or range bag and put it in another room, away from where you will be dry practicing. You will remain in one room only while dry practicing, so you will effectively be separated from your ammunition supply.

#### Questions:

1. What about keeping ammunition in the magazines so the have the proper weight, feel, and function for reloading or malfunction clearing practice?

**ABSOLUTELY NOT.** At some point you will end up with a round in the chamber. The muscle memory you program through dry practice with an empty magazine will be no different than using a full magazine.

2. What about using snap caps or similar devices to protect the weapon from the hammer falling on an empty chamber repeatedly?

This too is a poor idea because the habit of placing something in the chamber prior to dry practice will eventually lead to a negligent discharge. It is also likely that your snap caps can find their way into your live ammunition and result in a *click* when you wanted a *bang*! This can be hazardous to your health as well. In terms of damage to your weapon, with the exception of rim-fire handguns and rifles, dry practice is not detrimental to a modern weapon.

## Dry Practice Checklist

- Set a realistic dry practice goal before you start. A long practice session is not necessarily better because quality, not quantity, is the goal.
- Establish the proper mind set for dry practice.
- Establish and maintain control of your dry practice environment to eliminate all possible distractions.
- **UNLOAD THE WEAPON AND YOURSELF** and place the ammunition in another room.
- Chamber check the weapon to verify that it is unloaded and say, "The weapon is unloaded and I am ready for dry practice."
- Select an appropriate sized target and place it on a solid surface capable of stopping a bullet.
- Chamber check the weapon again and then begin dry practice.
- Terminate the dry practice session before significant physical and mental fatigue set in.
- Remove the dry practice target immediately upon finishing the dry practice session.
- Return the weapon to fighting mode — loaded and placed in its usual location such as a holster, fanny pack, briefcase, or nightstand.
- Say aloud, "The weapon is loaded and dry practice is over."

## **PART TWO**

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### **Firing Side Muzzle Up Carry and Presentation (American Carry)**



When deciding to carry muzzle up, remember to be muzzle conscious.



Elevate the muzzle and grab the sling with your support hand as close to the weapon and forward sling swivel as you can.



While controlling the weapon with your support hand on the sling, slip your firing side arm between the sling and the weapon while moving the weapon up to hang on the firing side shoulder.



Firing hand remains on the weapon to control it in the event the sling comes loose or the barrel catches on something.



To present the weapon, the firing hand drifts the weapon away from the firing side to clear gear as the support hand reaches across the body to grasp the stock



The support hand slides the weapon off the firing side shoulder as it starts to rotate the muzzle downrange. Once the firing hand is clear of the sling, it establishes a firing grip on the weapon.



As you are searching for or acquiring your target, both hands move the toe of the stock into the pocket of the shoulder.

### **Support Side Muzzle Down Carry and Presentation (African Carry)**



Muzzle down carry keeps debris and water out of the barrel, as long as you are careful when squatting down to recover something.



To sling muzzle down, lower the muzzle to the support side, using the support hand to control and support the weapon.



Grasp the sling close to the rear sling swivel with the firing hand. The firing hand is now controlling and supporting the weapon.



Insert the support arm between the sling and rifle and use the firing hand to move the sling and weapon up to the support shoulder.



The weapon hangs off of the support shoulder by the sling, with the support hand on the weapon to control it.





To present the weapon, use the support hand to point the muzzle straight downrange as the firing hand reaches across the body.



Both hands rotate the weapon as they bring it to the firing side shoulder. Remember to keep the weapon perpendicular to the body in order to minimize target indicators.

### Reference Point for the Trigger Finger



The trigger finger should be off the trigger and rest along the receiver or stock of the weapon. There will be some feature of the weapon that can serve as a reference point for the trigger finger.

### M1 Garand/M14/M1A/Mini 14



The trigger finger rests on the Safety while searching for targets. After firing, finger is straight, outside trigger guard.

## Clearing – Semi-Automatics



Ensure the Safety lever is on SAFE.



Operate the magazine release button or lever and ensure there is no magazine inserted in the weapon. This is especially important for weapons that have magazines that when inserted, are flush with the stock. (Mini-14's five round magazines, etc.)



Ensure the bolt is locked or held to the rear. Rotate the weapon so that the chamber can be seen. If the chamber can be touched, then check the chamber physically as well as visually.



Using the support index finger, sweep the magazine well to ensure it is not blocked.

### Clearing – Bolt Actions



Depending on what type of Safety the bolt action has, move the Safety to the appropriate position to allow the bolt to be operated.



With the bolt open, look and if possible, touch the chamber to ensure it is clear along with the internal magazine follower to ensure there are no rounds in the magazine.

### Clearing – Lever Actions



Open the action and visually inspect the chamber.



Close the action and check the magazine tube to make sure it is empty.



While maintaining positive control of the hammer, depress the trigger and move the hammer to half-cock.

**Loading – AR**



Before loading, the weapon must be cleared as previously discussed.



Access a magazine with rounds; touch and look at the top round to see which side it is on.



Insert the magazine into the magazine well, pushing on the bottom until it is seated, then gently pulling to ensure it is seated.



Palm strike the bolt release with the support hand. The heel of the palm provides a greater surface area to find the bolt release than a thumb or finger. Whenever possible, always allow the buffer assembly spring to strip and chamber the round.



In order to perform a chamber check and make sure a round was chambered, remove the magazine. Touch and look at the top round to ensure it has changed sides. Reinsert the magazine with a push and a pull.



If the weapon is equipped with an ejection port cover, close it at this time in order to prevent dust and debris from getting inside a closed system.

### Unloading – AR



Ensure the Safety is on SAFE.



Operate the magazine release and remove the magazine from the magazine well. Place the magazine in a pocket or a pouch, but preferably separated from the full magazines.



Rotate the weapon so the ejection port is down. Place the support hand so it covers the ejection port and supports the weapon. Brace the heel of the stock against the body and pull the charging handle to the rear with the firing hand. Make sure the support hand is cupped so the round in the chamber can be ejected into it.



Support thumb reaches around and pushes the bolt catch while firing hand pulls the charging handle to the rear to lock the bolt to the rear.



Once the bolt is locked to the rear, visually inspect the chamber.



Insert the support hand index finger into the magazine well to ensure it is clear.

### Loading – M1A / AK



After putting the weapon on Safe and ensuring there is no magazine in the weapon, check the chamber and magazine well, both visually and physically. Insert the top front of the magazine into the magazine well and rock the magazine back until it locks. Push forward on the back of the magazine to make sure it is seated.



Firing side hand pulls back on and then releases operating rod handle. Chamber check by removing the magazine to see if the top round changed sides or cracking the bolt slightly to see brass, then **releasing** (without riding bolt forward).

## Unloading – M1A / AK

After putting the weapon on Safe, remove the magazine and put it away. Pull the operating rod handle to the rear and catch the ejected round in the support hand. Lock or hold the bolt to the rear and check the chamber and magazine well. AKs will need to insert a flag safety, then put the weapon on safe, as the bolt does not lock to the rear without the addition of an after-market safety with a notch for the operating rod handle to fit into.

## Loading – Bolt Action



Ensure the weapon is unloaded.



Place a round over the internal box magazine with the firing hand. Press the round down and back with the thumb. Repeat until the internal magazine is full.



Once the internal magazine is filled, run the bolt forward and lock it down.





To perform a chamber check, unlock the bolt and draw it back enough to see and touch brass.



If the Safety was on Fire in order to operate the bolt, place it on Safe at this time.

### Unloading – Bolt Action



If the weapon needs to be on Fire in order to operate the bolt, place it on Fire at this time.



Support hand supports the weapon as the firing side hand operates the bolt to push rounds out of the magazine feed lips and eject them into the support hand.



Ensure the chamber and internal magazine are clear.

### **Loading – Lever Action**



Ensure the weapon is unloaded.



Feed rounds into the magazine tube.



Operate the lever action to chamber a round.



Open the action enough to see brass.



With the thumb on the hammer, press the trigger and ride the hammer forward to the half-cock position.

### Unloading – Lever Action



Support the weapon and use one hand to run the action to eject rounds into the other hand.



Once all rounds have been ejected, with the action open, look into the chamber to make sure it is clear. Close the action and check the magazine tube for rounds.

## Offhand Shooting Stance



Feet are shoulder width apart, weight evenly balanced. Take a half step back with the firing side foot, with the toes of the support foot turning the same direction as the toes of the firing side foot, to achieve a blade or offset from your opponent. The feet, hips and shoulders are all in one plane. The length of pull, or length of your stock, will sometimes determine the angle you are offset. A longer stock will cause you to blade more, a shorter stock, less. The key to an ideal stance is to ensure that you keep your feet, hips and shoulders on the same plane. Remember that this position as described is a solid range position, and your circumstances and available cover or concealment will dictate how and when the position is used, and what form it will take.



Bend forward at the waist over the feet, not towards the target. This helps absorb recoil with the upper body. How far you lean depends on the weapon being fired. Ensure that you keep your weight evenly distributed on your feet, toes to heel. The head is erect and looking downrange towards your target.

## Grip



Establish a firm grip with the firing side hand. The grip should be firm enough to control the weapon's movement, but not so tight that the knuckles and fingertips turn white. Trigger finger should be straight, with the thumb riding on the Safety.



The support hand palm is centered underneath the handguard/forend, as far forward as is comfortable, with the fingers naturally curled and relaxed. A tight grip with the support hand will cause muscle tension, making the support arm shake, and transferring that wobble into the sights.



The toe of the buttstock, about one to two inches, is placed in the pocket of the shoulder, close to the neck.



Keeping the head erect, raise the weapon's sights to the firing side eye, making positive contact on the comb of the stock with the cheek (stockweld). Remember to keep the firing side eye as close to the sights as possible for proper eye relief. The cheek presses on the comb, the firing hand pulls weapon back into the shoulder pocket.



When the weapon is mounted correctly, the support elbow should be underneath as much as possible and pointing to the ground. The firing side elbow hangs naturally. If the support or firing side elbows are held out, it will create muscle tension, causing the arms to shake and transfer that wobble into the sights. They now also become potential targets.



## Ready Position



In the Ready position, the correct stance and grip is maintained, with the exception of the stockweld. The muzzle is depressed enough to obtain a good field of view for the environment you are in. Ideally, part of the jaw should be in contact with the comb of the stock. This ready is hard to maintain for long periods; the advantage is rapid presentation.



To present to a target, simply take the weapon off Safe and bring the weapon's sights up to the firing side eye with both arms and re-establish the stockweld as the trigger finger finds the trigger.

### High Ready Position



In the High Ready position, the upper body is still leaning forward, and the hands maintain their grip on the weapon. The muzzle or front sight assembly is at eye level, and the buttstock is between the ribcage and elbow. This ready is also hard to maintain for long periods, but is good for searching areas at eye level or higher.



To present to a target, push the weapon away from the body towards the target, as it is taken off Safe, far enough to clear clothing and gear.



Pull the weapon into the shoulder pocket and establish the correct stockweld.

### Field Ready Position



At the Field Ready position, the body is erect and relaxed, both hands on the weapon. The weapon can be hanging on a tactical sling or held at the waist with both arms relaxed.



When a target is to be engaged, point both arms towards the target. As the weapon is being raised, disengage the Safety, turn the weapon in the support hand with the firing hand so it is vertical as the upper body leans forward. Start to pull the weapon towards the shoulder as you point the support elbow to the ground.



Pull the weapon into the shoulder pocket and establish the correct stockweld.

## After-Action Drills

Once an opponent has been engaged and is not an immediate, shootable threat, we perform a series of after action drills to secure our environment.

We will **quick check** the immediate area for further threats, refocus on the primary adversary for a **final check** on him, then **scan** our surroundings in detail.

Remember that the known, deadly threat in front of you takes precedence unless you are already aware of other threats.

It is always advisable to move to cover or to an advantageous position during a fight, yet on the live fire range it is not safe to move to any great extent.

**Safe dry practice is the venue to ingrain the habit of moving to cover.**





If your opponent is a deadly threat, shoot him until the threat stops! Once the threat has ceased, lower the weapon enough to assess the situation while moving to a position of cover or advantage.



Once the target is down and you are moving, Quick Check in both directions in order to locate an adversary that may be close to you that you have not yet seen.



Perform a Final Check on the adversary to ensure he is no longer a threat to you. The **final check** of the downed adversary may take seconds or minutes. You may have to keep your attention on him until police arrive or you can retreat. If your opponent is still a potential threat, move to a position of advantage and use quick checks to maintain awareness of your surroundings.



Once you are sure your adversary is no longer a threat, you need to Scan your entire environment, 360 degrees. As you perform the Scan, be muzzle conscious as you look high and low for additional threats. As you are turning and looking, your weapon is oriented in the same direction as you are looking so you are able to rapidly engage a threat should you need to. At the start of the Scan, quickly check your weapon to ensure it looks ready to fire. Once you have completed your Scan and see no other adversaries to engage, place the weapon back on Safe.

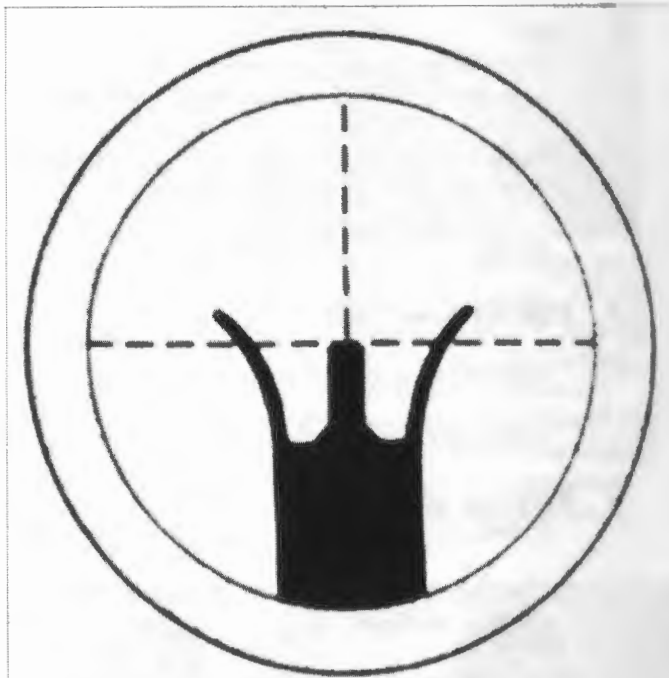


## After Action Drills Summary

- **Finish the fight!**  
Don't take your attention off of an active, known threat to look for potential threats.
- **Move!**  
Don't be an exposed, static target. Move aggressively to a position of cover or advantage.  
  
Circle a downed opponent as you quick check to clear your surroundings if you need to.  
  
Escape if you can do so safely.
- **Fight off tunnel vision**  
  
Once the main threat is down, look around.  
  
Take a few slow, deep breaths.
- **Keep your gun running!**  
Reload your rifle at every opportunity.  
  
Chamber check or glance at your gun to make sure it's functional.
- **Check for injuries!**  
Check yourself for injuries that you may not have felt. Apply direct pressure to stop any serious bleeding.
- **Call for help!**  
Get police and medics on their way. Make sure that dispatch knows that you're the victim. Be very careful as the police arrive so they don't perceive you as a threat.

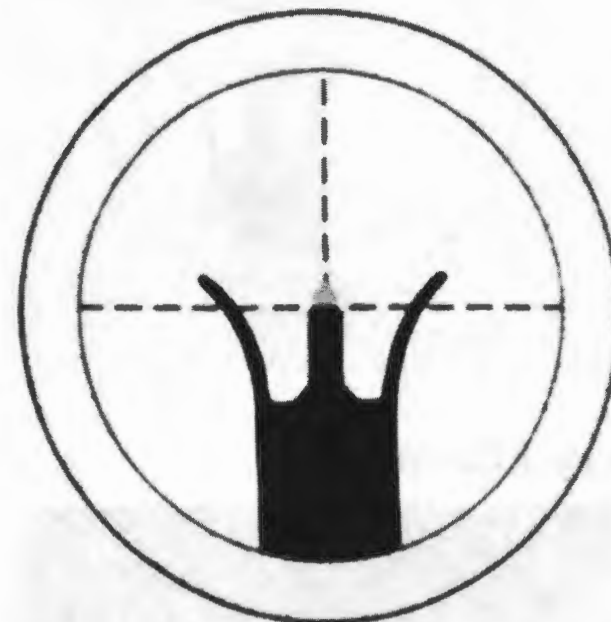
## Three Secrets

### Sight Alignment



Sight Alignment is the relationship between the firing eye, rear sight and front sight. Correct Sight Alignment is when the *tip* of the front sight is centered both vertically and horizontally in the rear sight aperture. When using optics, the reticle is centered in the tube and you have a good, clear field of view with no shading.

### Sight Picture



Sight Picture is placing correct Sight Alignment center mass on the target. The target and the rear sight should be out of focus, with a sharp, clear view of the tip of the front sight. In order to get this clear view of the front sight tip, the support eye should be closed. Correct Sight Alignment and Sight Picture are extremely critical the further away from the target you are. Slight errors in either that allow reasonable hits at close range will cause misses at greater distances. Remember, your front sight is your gauge on how critical your sight alignment and sight picture are; large target, small front sight—alignment not as critical as large front sight, small target.



An example of improper Sight Alignment and the effects on the impact of the round as the range to the target increases.

### Trigger Control



Trigger control is manipulating the trigger in such a manner that when the shot is fired, Sight Alignment and Sight Picture are not disturbed. The trigger press must be straight to the rear and consistent. Pressing the trigger is a physical skill; controlling the trigger is a mental skill.



In order to control the trigger, the placement of the trigger finger needs to be consistent. Ideally, the center of the pad should be in contact with the trigger (above) in order to apply steady pressure straight to the rear. Depending on hand size and the weapon being fired, the trigger may fall somewhere in between the lines shown on the trigger finger (below).



Once the shot is fired, trap the trigger to the rear. While the weapon is recoiling, continue to apply the Three Secrets until the round has left the muzzle. This is Follow Through.

While in the Follow Through on semi-automatic weapons, the trigger finger is relaxed just enough to acquire the trigger reset in case subsequent shots need to be fired as you recover to your aiming point. The finger should not leave the trigger until you are done shooting. Bolt and lever action weapons are cycled during the recoil so that when the sights recover to the target, if it is still there, another shot can be taken.

When first Dry Practicing presentation and the Three Secrets, it will be more beneficial to separate them. Practice presentations, being as consistent and as smooth as possible in mounting the gun, getting the Safety off, acquiring the sights, and placing the trigger finger on the trigger.

When working on trigger control, use a blank or neutral background to aim in at so all there is to look at are the sights. Watch the front sight carefully when manipulating the trigger. Any movement in the front sight when the hammer falls on the dry press indicates an error in trigger control.

Once there is no movement in the sights when the trigger is pressed, alternate presenting to the blank background and the dry practice target while pushing to go a little faster each time. If movement of the front sight or reticle begins to creep in during the dry press, slow down, or separate presentation from the Three Secrets again until the trigger control is back.

## Zeroing

### Elements of Zeroing

Zeroing is adjusting the sights on a weapon to cause the bullet to hit a designated point. Varying weather conditions and using different ammunition may necessitate re-zeroing the rifle. A 200 yard zero gives you a point blank range from 0 yards to around 235 yards (+/-) where the trajectory of your round will never be above or below your point of aim more than the distance the center of your sights are above the center of your bore. This allows you to hold center on your target and hit close to your point of aim without adjusting your sights or your aiming point unless you are firing at a target smaller than the thoracic cavity that is closer than 50 yards.

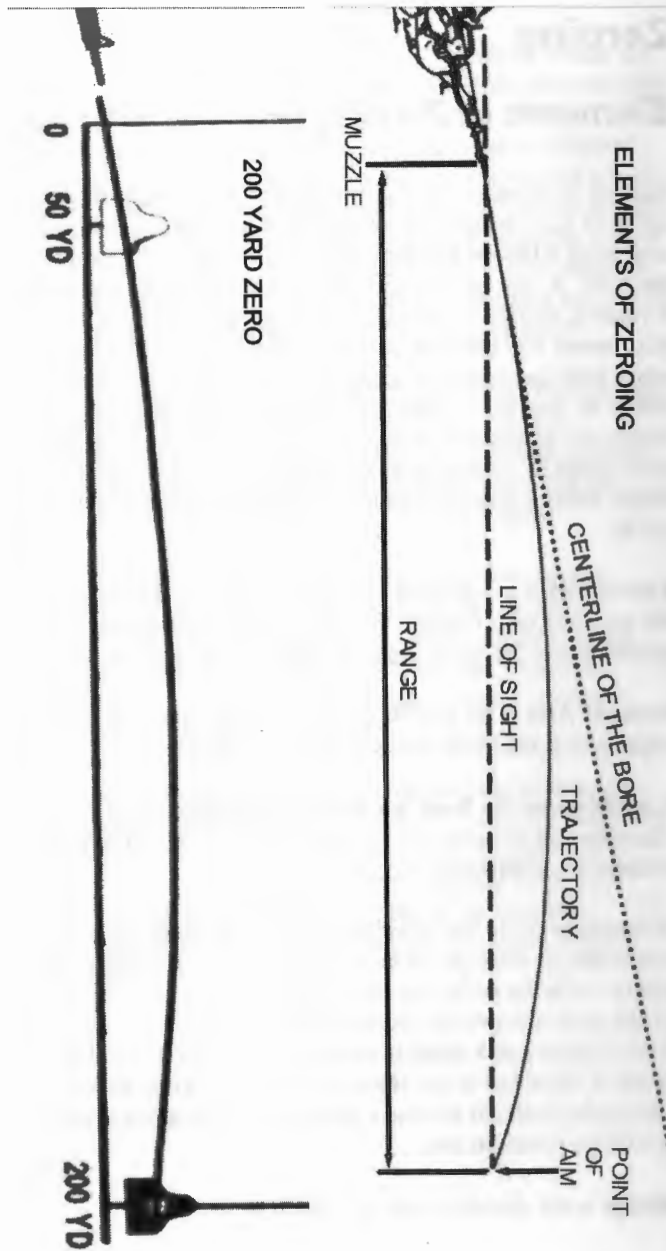
**Line of Sight** is a straight line which begins at the center of the eye, proceeds through the center of the rear aperture, and passes across the tip of the front sight post to a point of aim.

**Point of Aim** is the precise point where the tip of the front sight post is placed in relationship to the target.

**Centerline of the Bore** is a straight line beginning at the chamber end of the barrel, proceeding out of the muzzle, and continuing indefinitely.

**Trajectory** is the path a bullet travels. This path starts as the bullet travels through the bore. Gravity does not affect the bullet while the bullet travels through the barrel. Once the bullet exits the muzzle, gravity causes the bullet to drop. The trajectory of a bullet is arced. It travels first at a slight upward angle due to the angle of the barrel. Then gravity causes the bullet to assume a downward, falling angle until the bullet comes to rest.

**Range** is the distance from the rifle to the target.



## Zeroing Process

The trajectory for most practical rifles will cross the line of sight at 50 yards, then again at 200 yards **when setting a 200 yard zero on the rifle**. Practical rifles should be able to engage thoracic cavity sized targets from close up to 200 yards without having to adjust the sights or worry about holdover or offset. Optics are usually zeroed at 100 yards. There are many different types of zeros that can be used; choose the one that best fits your needs.

If the weapon has M16A2 type sights, then zeroing should be done with the large aperture, (good from 0-200 yards, for low-light, moving and multiple targets), with the rear elevation bottomed out and set to 8/3 (or 6/3, depending on weapon). During zeroing, all elevation changes are done with the front sight post, if it is adjustable.

When zeroing, as much human error as possible needs to be removed from the process, so supporting the weapon on sandbags is ideal. Acquire sight alignment and sight picture, hard focus on the front sight once it is on the aiming point, and fire three to five rounds. If firing a semi-automatic rifle, the trigger finger should not come off the trigger until all shots are fired. If the first group is fist sized or smaller, and not where the aim point was, adjust the sights and fire a second string, using the same aiming point. (Remember when adjusting the sights, especially if you are not familiar with the adjustments, make bold adjustments; make the group move!) Repeat the process until point of aim/point of impact is achieved. It should take no more than three to five strings to zero a weapon. If possible, confirm the zero is **point of aim/point of impact at 200 yards**.

If you were centered at 50 yards, and you are low at 200 yards on the first string, don't panic! Fire another string before adjusting the sights, because your perception of the target has changed.

## Reloading

### Tactical Reload – Semi-Automatic



After completion of the After Action Drills, or during a lull, perform a tactical reload in order to keep the weapon full of ammunition. While observing your surroundings, remove the magazine from the weapon and place in a pouch or pocket. Access a fresh magazine and insert it into the magazine well with a push and a pull.



### Tactical Reload – Bolt Action



During a lull in the fight, it is important to top-off the internal magazine, as it generally does not hold many rounds. While scanning, support the weapon with the support hand close to the receiver. Run the action to the rear, catching the round from the chamber and pressing it down and back into the internal magazine, either with the support fingers or firing side thumb. Access a loose round and feed it into the magazine. If you fired more than one round, replace those rounds as well to top off the internal magazine.





Close the action and continue to scan for threats.



### Tactical Reload – Lever Action



During a lull, while scanning, hold the weapon with the support hand. Access a loose round and feed it through the loading gate into the tube magazine. Repeat until the magazine is full.



Continue to scan for threats.



## Emergency Reload – Semi-Auto



When a magazine runs dry during firing on most semi-automatics, the action will lock to the rear.



You will get a 'dead' or funny feeling trigger. As the trigger finger goes straight, look in the ejection port and move to cover while identifying the problem.



While holding the weapon as high as possible, access a magazine from a pocket or pouch with the support hand and bring the magazine up towards the magazine well.



As the filled magazine is coming up to the weapon, the empty is ejected and drops. Insert the full magazine with a push and pull.



Once the magazine is seated, the support hand palm strikes the bolt release to chamber a round.



Support hand re-acquires the weapon as you attempt to re-acquire your adversary. These actions should be reflexive. Actually pressing the trigger is a conscious decision.

## Emergency Reload – M1A/AK



The bolts of the M1A type weapons will lock back on an empty magazine, resulting in a dead trigger. The bolts on AK type weapons do *not* lock back on an empty magazine, resulting in a Type 1 malfunction, a failure to fire, or normal trigger press with no round fired. Attempt to fire again if you are still threatened. If you get another Type 1 malfunction, your magazine is empty.

With M1A / AK type weapons, ensure your support thumb is sticking out as you are bringing up the fresh magazine. The thumb operates the magazine release and then pushes the empty magazine out of the weapon. The fresh magazine is rocked and locked into place. While supporting the weapon with the support hand on the magazine or on the stock, the firing hand pulls back and releases the operating rod handle, then re-establishes a firing grip.

## Emergency Reload – Bolt Action



When a bolt action runs dry during firing, you will get a normal trigger press, but the weapon does not fire.



Since it is not obvious whether the internal magazine is empty or whether you had a round that failed to fire, run the action with the firing hand while flipping the weapon 90 degrees to the firing side.



If your adversary is still a threat, attempt to fire again.



After the second press, if no round is fired, move and open the bolt. Look to see if it is empty, then place a loose round in the receiver, and close the action.



If your adversary is still a threat, point back in and fire. **Immediately load another round.** Following the After Action Drills, re-fill the internal magazine.

### ***Emergency Reload – Lever Action***



When a lever action runs dry during firing, you will get a normal trigger press, but the weapon does not fire.



Since it is not obvious whether the tube magazine is empty or whether you had a round that failed to fire, run the action with the firing hand while flipping the weapon 90 degrees to the side, ejection port down.



If your adversary is still a threat, point in and attempt to fire.



After the second press, if no round is fired, move, open the action, insert a loose round in the receiver, and close the action.



If your adversary is still a threat, point in and fire. **Immediately load another round.** Following your After Action Drills, fill the tube magazine.

## Malfunction Clearances

A **malfunction** is loosely defined as an interruption in the cycle of operation of the gun that can be cleared in the field quickly without the use of tools. In contrast, a **jam** is a stoppage that will require tools, disassembly, or even an armorer's services to clear it. If we experience a jammed gun mid-fight our options are retreat or transition to another weapon. If our weapon malfunctions we first try to deal with it on a symptom specific basis, i.e. look at or feel the weapon to see what's wrong and then fix that specific problem. With practice, the physical clearance procedures should be ingrained to the point of being nearly reflexive.

Once the malfunction is cleared, however, the decision to fire or not must be a **conscious decision**. Take care in your malfunction clearance practice not to ingrain a trigger press as the unthinking, reflexive finale of the clearance process.

A serious malfunction or an empty gun may take you out of the fight for several seconds. Standing in place with your gun inoperative makes you an easy target. Since aggressive movement is seldom allowed during range practice, it is all too easy to ingrain the habit of standing still while managing your gun. Fight this trend by incorporating functional movement into your dry practice, or clearing the weapon from a supported position.

Transitioning to a backup weapon is a great option, if you have a backup weapon. Clubbing your adversary with the inoperative rifle may be necessary at close quarters.

If you have cleared a malfunction and not fired, **check the gun** to ensure that the malfunction was cleared.

### **Type 1 Malfunction: Failure to Fire – Semi-Automatics**



On pressing the trigger, the hammer falls but no shot is fired. You get a click instead of a bang.



Keep the weapon high with your eyes on your target as the trigger finger goes straight. Tap and tug the bottom of the magazine with the support hand to ensure it is seated.



Pull back on the charging handle as you roll the weapon 90 degrees so the ejection port is down. Let the charging handle go; do not ride it forward!



If your adversary is still a threat, point in and fire. You must make the intellectual decision whether a shot is necessary.

**Type 1 Malfunction: Failure to Fire – Bolt Action**



On pressing the trigger, the hammer falls but no shot is fired. You get a click instead of a bang.



Keep the weapon high and the trigger finger goes straight. Run the action with the firing hand while flipping the weapon 90 degrees to the firing side.



If your adversary is still a threat, point back in and fire. You must make the intellectual decision whether a shot is necessary.

**Type 1 Malfunction: Failure to Fire – Lever Action**



On pressing the trigger, the hammer falls but no shot is fired. You get a click instead of a bang.



Keep the weapon high and the trigger finger goes straight. Run the action with the firing hand while flipping the weapon 90 degrees to the firing side.



If your adversary is still a threat, point in and fire. You must make the intellectual decision whether a shot is necessary.

### **Type 2 Malfunction: Failure to Eject – Semi-Automatics**



On pressing the trigger, nothing happens (no shot fired). The trigger may not feel normal. If you are not behind cover or not already moving, begin to move, with the trigger finger straight, as you look to identify the problem.







Keeping the weapon high while observing your target, tap and tug the bottom of the magazine with the support hand to ensure it is seated.



Pull back on the charging handle as you roll the weapon 90 degrees so the ejection port is down. Let the charging handle go; do not ride it forward!



If your adversary is still a threat, point back in and fire. You must make the intellectual decision whether a shot is necessary.

### **Type 2 Malfunction: Failure to Eject – Bolt Action**



As you are running the bolt, it does not go all the way forward and back into battery.



Keeping the weapon high, if not already behind cover, begin to move as you look to identify the problem. Run the action all the way back with the firing hand as you are rolling the weapon 90 degrees to the firing side. Run the bolt forward and lock it down as you bring the weapon back upright.



If your adversary is still a threat, point back in and fire. You must make the intellectual decision whether a shot is necessary.

### **Type 3 Malfunction: Feedway Stoppage – Semi-Automatics**



On pressing the trigger, nothing happens (no shot fired). The trigger will not feel normal. If you are not behind cover or not already moving, begin to move with the trigger finger straight as you look to identify the problem.





Seek cover, if you do not already have it, or keep moving while locking the bolt to the rear and stripping the magazine out of the magazine well. (If this is your only magazine, retain it.)



Run a finger through the magazine well to the upper receiver and sweep out any rounds or brass.



Roll the weapon 90 degrees so the ejection port is down and rack the charging handle **three** times in order to clear the chamber.



Insert a magazine into the magazine well with a push and a pull.



Pull back the charging handle and let it go in order to chamber a round. (Do not ride the charging handle forward!)



If your adversary is still a threat, point in and fire. You must make the intellectual decision whether a shot is necessary.



If, when you look into the ejection port, you see the round from the magazine stuck against a round or casing in the chamber, it is a failure to extract (feedway stoppage). This is more likely to happen in non-AR type weapons.



Seek cover or begin to move while stripping out the magazine.



Roll the weapon 90 degrees so the ejection port is down and rack the charging handle **three** times in order to clear the chamber.



Insert a magazine and ensure it is seated. Pull back the charging handle and let it go in order to chamber a round. (Do not ride the charging handle forward!)



If your adversary is still a threat, point in and fire. You must make the intellectual decision whether a shot is necessary.

### Type 3 Malfunction: Feedway Stoppage – Bolt Action



As you are running the bolt, it does not go all the way forward and back into battery. If you are not behind cover and not already moving, begin to move as you look to identify the problem.



Move the bolt to the rear as far as possible and either push the top round back into the magazine or flip it out of the weapon.



Pressing down on the top round in the magazine with the support fingers, start the bolt forward. Ride the bolt over the top round and lock it down.



Run the bolt to the rear to eject the round or casing in the chamber. Push the bolt forward to chamber a round and lock the bolt down.



If your adversary is still a threat, point in and fire. You must make the intellectual decision whether a shot is necessary.

## Supported Positions

Supported firing positions are used when a more stable firing platform is needed than the offhand position can provide or when you need to conform to cover or concealment.

When choosing a supported position, keep in mind that you will still need to be able to see your target. Also be mindful of how long it will take to assume a position, and to get out of it in order to move, if you need to.

The supported positions discussed below are under ideal circumstances, providing maximum bone support and muscle relaxation. When applied in the field, the positions will probably need to be modified to fit the terrain and the situation. Do what is necessary to get as stable as possible and get the hit!

### *Kneeling*



From the offhand position, you determine that you want to assume the kneeling position. Kneeling is fast to get into, and quick to recover from.



As you are taking the weapon off safe, trigger finger straight, take a half step forward with your support side foot. Once the foot is planted, sit on the firing side foot.



Body weight should be centered over the firing side heel. Firing side foot can either be up, with the toes curled, or flat, with the boot laces on the ground. Support elbow should be in front of the support knee, forearm as straight as possible. Legs should be spread approximately 45 degrees apart. Weapon is as close to the centerline of the body as possible.



When doing After Action Drills, the support elbow comes off the support knee so that you can turn your upper body for scanning your general area. If you need to move to a different position or to better cover, recover to standing while scanning, since you can see more now that you are higher.



## Squatting



From the offhand position, you determine that you want to assume the squatting position. Squatting is very quick to get into, and quick to recover from. This position offers support and stability while minimizing body contact with the ground.



As you drop your center of gravity between your feet, weapon comes off Safe, trigger finger straight. Elbows either inside or in front of the knees; both feet are flat on the ground. Lean forward between your legs to control recoil.



When performing your After Action Drills, elbows go outside the knees during the scan to allow the maximum movement possible. If you need to move, recover to standing and scan again.

## Sitting



From the offhand position, you determine that you want to assume the sitting position. Sitting is moderately quick to get into, and easy to recover from.



As your support side foot crosses over the firing side foot, weapon comes off Safe, trigger finger straight. Lean forward over the feet and sit.



In the crossed leg position, the legs are as relaxed as is possible, with both elbows inside the knees, or in front of the knees.



The crossed ankle position can be used on slopes and offers greater recoil control. The legs are relaxed, support elbow is in front of the support knee; firing side elbow is in front of the firing side knee, inside the knee, or on the thigh. The barrel is over the firing side heel.



The open legged sitting position is ideal when terrain is uneven and you need to fire up or down hill. Feet should be as flat as possible; legs should be as relaxed as possible.



During After Action Drills, elbows come off the legs in order to scan. If you need to move, roll over the firing side leg to kneeling, scan, then recover to standing and scan again while moving.



### Prone



From the offhand position, you determine that you want to assume the prone position. This position offers great support and stability, but takes time to get into and out of. You may not be able to acquire your target once in position, depending on terrain.



To assume the prone position, weapon comes off Safe, trigger finger straight as you drop to both knees while keeping your eyes on your target. One hand controls the weapon as the other reaches out to control your fall forward. When assuming the prone, the feet remain in place as you roll forward.



Catch yourself on the outstretched hand as you plant your elbow. Bring your free hand to the weapon and plant that elbow. The support elbow is underneath the weapon as much as possible. Ideally, you are planted on the outside of the support elbow in order to lock it into place and reduce wobble.



In the open leg prone, the feet should not have moved beyond shoulder width apart, feet are off the toes, relaxed, and as flat as possible.



In the cocked-leg prone, the firing side leg is bent and cocked forward. The support leg is fairly straight, with the toes pointed towards the firing side. This position gives you a little more elevation, should you need it, and also brings the lungs off the ground, reducing the effects of heavy breathing on the sighting process.

When performing your After Action Drills, splay your elbows out in order to get as much movement as possible from your body. If you need to clear a malfunction, or do a tactical reload, do it while as low as possible before exposing yourself to a potential threat.



After scanning, if you need to move, push yourself with one hand up into the kneeling position, scan, then stand, move and scan again.



## Harries Flashlight Technique

### *Semi-Automatic*



If you do not have a dedicated light on your weapon, a handheld light can be used. The weapon is supported on the back of the support wrist as it presses back against the magazine and magazine well.



The support arm is parallel to the ground, keeping the wrist straight and keeping the support hand clear of the ejection port.



The firing hand and support wrist press the weapon into the shoulder pocket while the muzzle is depressed. This is the Flashlight Ready.



While searching for a target, the light is on and the trigger finger is straight.



For malfunctions or reloads, tuck the light under the firing side armpit, lens to the rear. This frees up your support hand so it can manipulate the weapon and magazine.

## Bolt / Lever Actions



Since bolt action rifles may not have magazines that protrude, the rifle is resting on top of the support wrist.



After firing, the support hand turns palm up in order to support the weapon so the bolt can be cycled.

## Use of Slings to Support a Firing Position

Just about all types of slings, with the exception of single point slings, can be used to support a firing position in such a way that the sling supports the majority of the rifle's weight, taking the strain off of the shooter.

There are purpose built slings, such as safari slings, ching slings, and competition slings that are designed specifically to be used to support a firing position. Some, like the safari and ching slings, are easy to get into, and easy to get out of. Competition slings are more difficult to put on, and take longer to get out of.

Tactical and carry strap type slings can be used as hasty slings if their lengths are adjusted correctly.

No matter which type of sling you choose, remember that in a defensive gunfight in your home, you will probably not want to deal with using a sling at all unless necessary.



In order to use a ching sling, your rifle needs to have three attachment points. The tension of the sling wrapped around the arm supports the rifle in the pocket with very little muscle tension used by the shooter to hold the rifle up.



The safari type sling usually consists of two straps with an adjustable 'stirrup' strap connecting them. The stirrup strap is grabbed by the firing hand and placed high up on the upper arm.



When the stirrup is adjusted correctly, the tension of the arm on the strap supports the rifle with very little muscle tension used by the shooter to maintain a stable firing platform.



The main advantage of the tactical sling is the ability to have both hands free in the event you need to carry or assist someone while still having the rifle accessible. It is also useful during training on a range in helping with reducing fatigue.

Unless you need both hands free, in a defensive situation, *get out of the sling!* If an opponent were to get a hold of the sling or the rifle while it is attached to your body, things could go from bad to much worse very quickly. It is advisable when using a tactical sling to have one that has a quick release buckle, and that you should be able to find it under stress or while wrestling with someone. At the very least, if your sling does not have a quick release buckle, you need to practice getting out of the sling under pressure or when bound up with an opponent. This is another area where having a training partner is helpful.



## Hearing Protection



A low profile, headset type hearing protection with a cutout for a rifle or shotgun stock is highly recommended, especially if the rifle or shotgun is your primary home defense weapon. You will lose hearing if you fire a rifle or shotgun inside a closed space with no hearing protection.



The problem with high profile, headset type hearing protection is that when the rifle or shotgun is correctly mounted, the comb of the stock can knock it off the firing side ear.

## Training Notes

Remember, *no ammunition is used during Dry Practice!* Follow the four safety rules and the dry practice procedures.

Your two main goals to practice during training for a potential gunfight are 1) Get the hit and 2) Keep the gun running.

When practicing techniques, especially new ones, slow is smooth, and smooth is quick. Be smooth, and you will be fast when it counts.

Training on a live-fire range will allow you to:

- Safely practice weapons handling with a 'hot' or loaded weapon.
- Practice your marksmanship skills.

Some of the drawbacks to range training may be:

- You may be limited in how you move, if not required to be completely static.
- You may be on a range that allows you a good field of view, especially of your target, and you are standing on a firing line in the open with no option to seek cover.
- Firing cues are usually commands or the target turning towards you, or some other artificial means of letting you know it is time to fire.
- You will not get any realistic feedback from your target.
- You may be limited in your options on how to respond to the threat.
  - You are told how many rounds you may fire, and how quickly.
  - You cannot disengage, or back away.

When practicing on your own, as much as possible, you should keep the following in mind:

- Realize that you always have three choices when dealing with an adversary you are not able to avoid, depending on the circumstances:
  - You can hold your ground to see what he does.
  - You can retreat if conditions permit.
  - You can choose to engage if you think it is necessary.
- When dealing with one or more opponents, it is ideal to be in a position of advantage; behind cover or at least concealed from view if at all possible.
- Know how much ambient light is available to you in your environment, and plan accordingly.
  - Master switch for the home that turns on at least one light in every room.
  - Flashlights and spares.
  - Knowing how much light is available to you in case you don't have a master switch or flashlight.
- Is there a way to minimize the threat areas you have to control?
- Is there a way to stack, or line up, multiple threats so they are easier to deal with?
- What in your environment can be used as a barrier to your adversary?

Some questions you need to ask yourself:

- Planning to defend your home is a great idea, but is that the only potential location for an attack on you and your family?
- Have you given thought to a potential fight starting in or around a vehicle or vehicles?
- Have you given serious thought to who you might be fighting? Is it going to be a Hollywood

stereotype villain, or are the people you might have to fight going to look like normal, or almost normal, citizens? Are you keeping up with the local news? Who is committing violent crimes in your area, such as armed robbery or home invasions or are involved in carjackings?

- How will you know when to shoot? Have you decided what your 'trigger' or 'line in the sand' is going to be for different situations?
- Once that line is crossed, are you mentally prepared to use deadly force in defense of yourself or others?
- Have you made the decision to be a dedicated opponent? Are you mentally prepared to win, even if you have sustained injuries?
- Have you made decisions on what you should do after the fight?
  - Move to safety.
  - Call for help.
  - Check for and treat any injuries to yourself or family members.
    - Do you have the training?
    - Do you have the equipment?
  - Staying busy with planned routines is a good way to blunt the effects of shock and help you stay alert.

Your dry practice should evolve beyond a static firing line, keeping in mind the questions above that pertain to you and your situation. You should practice as much as possible in an appropriate and realistic environment. For example, practicing reloading or clearing malfunctions in a supported position in low light or darkness, actually moving to real or simulated cover, etc. Red guns and Airsoft™ guns are another way to train realistically, where the potential to cover your body or someone else's with a muzzle is heightened.

Sometimes, all you need is your mind and an active imagination in order to practice, at least mentally, what you would do. For example, if you were attacked at a mall, parking garage, traffic light or any public place you and your family might be, how could you avoid or defend?

Remember, YOU are the weapon, your gun is just a tool.

## **PART THREE**

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## Reading Your Target

Almost all of your improvement in gun handling and marksmanship will come through correct dry practice. However, you must validate that correct dry practice on occasion with live fire drills. These live fire drills must be conducted at a proper firing range under carefully controlled "live fire" conditions.

After firing several controlled pairs to the thoracic cavity of your target, you will have a group on the target which is full of valuable information. The diagrams and discussions in this section will help you diagnose which techniques you are doing correctly and which ones still need attention. We call this "Reading Your Target". The following information assumes your weapon is correctly sighted in and functioning properly.

You must remember that because you are engaging targets well beyond the range of handguns and shotguns that any small error in sight alignment, sight picture, and trigger control that could get reasonable hits at close range will cause peripheral hits or misses the further away your target is.

## Proper Handspan

Ideally your group will be approximately a handspan in size and well centered in the thoracic cavity. This shows you have the correct balance of speed and accuracy. Remember, under the stress of an actual gunfight, that group will approximately double in size but it will still be inside the thoracic cavity.



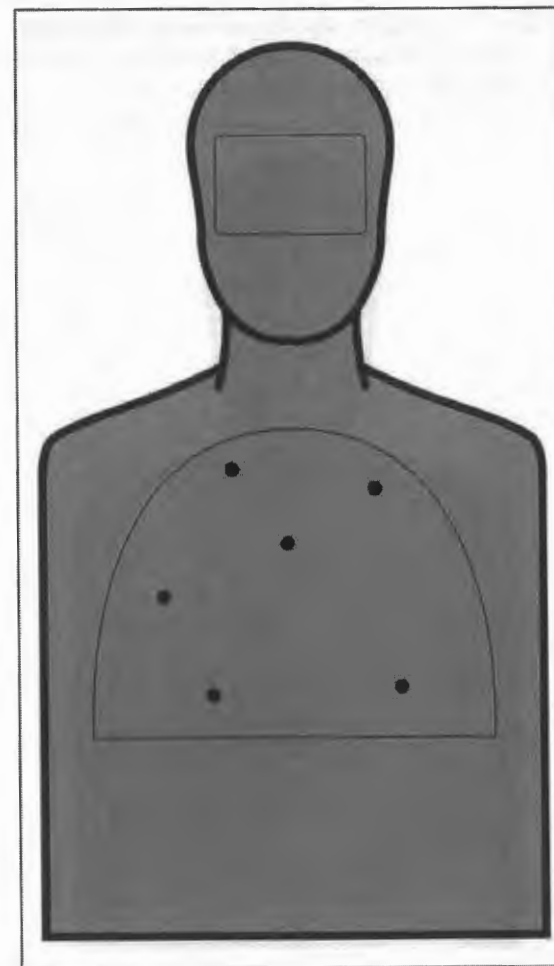
### Group Too Small

As nice as this group looks, it is too small. You are taking too much time to deliver very accurate shots. On the spectrum of speed vs. accuracy, this group represents too much accuracy. Your opponent may take advantage of your slow delivery and hit you first. Speed up a little bit.



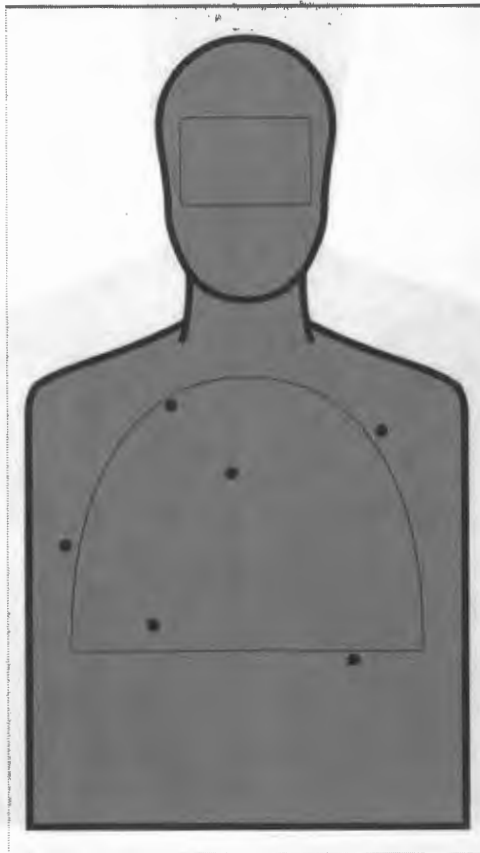
### Group Too Large

This group is too large and means you are sacrificing accuracy for speed. You are going too fast. Under the conditions of a gunfight, especially if the range to the target increases, some of these hits will be peripherals or misses. Slow down a little bit.



### Group Well Centered but Huge

This very large group is indicative of not focusing on the front sight. You may be looking over the top of the weapon entirely and focusing on the target or looking through the sights but focusing at the target. In either case, looking at the target cannot guarantee proper sight alignment or sight picture and the hits are poor. Slow down and focus on the front sight. Depending on the distance to the target, not focusing on the front sight will cause your shots to miss the thoracic cavity, if not the target entirely.



### Group High

This is a proper handspan group but it is high in the thoracic cavity. There are two causes for this. First is incorrect sight alignment. You are simply holding the front sight too high in the rear sight. Make certain the front sight tip is centered both vertically and horizontally. Secondly, some shooters aim too high in the thoracic cavity. This is usually caused by a misunderstanding of human anatomy or ballistics of their bullet. Hold right in the center of the thoracic cavity. That gives you the best chance at hitting vital tissue and gives you the largest margin for error.



### Group Left

Groups which are at the proper height but are off to one side generally reflect incorrect trigger finger placement. If the right-handed shooter is hitting to the left, there is generally not enough trigger finger placed across the face of the trigger. If just the tip of the trigger finger contacts the trigger, the weapon is commonly pushed to the support side as the weapon fires. This can also be caused by a right handed shooter 'bucking' the firing shoulder into the weapon, or a left handed shooter 'flinching' the firing side shoulder away from the weapon as it is fired in anticipation of the shot and the associated recoil.



### Group Right

If the right-handed shooter is hitting to the right, there is generally too much trigger finger placed across the face of the trigger. The weapon is commonly pulled to the right as the weapon fires. This can also be caused by a left handed shooter 'bucking' the firing shoulder into the weapon, or a right handed shooter 'flinching' the firing side shoulder away from the weapon as it is fired in anticipation of the shot and the associated recoil.



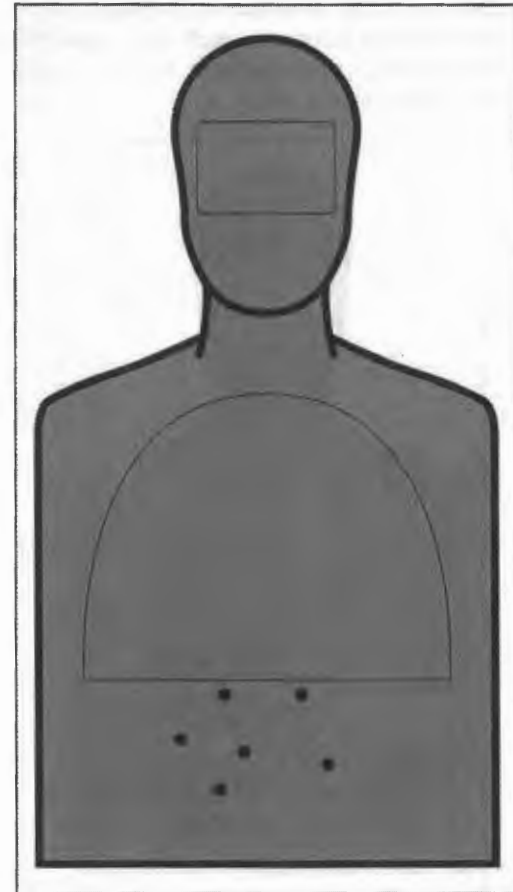
### Group Moderately Low

Groups which are near the bottom edge of the thoracic cavity are typically caused by either rushing the trigger press, or at close range, a difference in the sight height over the bore height. Ensure you gently press the trigger to obtain a surprise break. If it is due to sight height, with a correct zero, you will still be in the thoracic cavity.



### Group Very Low

Groups which are low, or very low and to one side, are caused by "mashing" or "slapping" the trigger. Mashing means squeezing with the whole hand (or hands) just before the shot is fired. Slapping means rushing the trigger press and having the finger fly off the trigger after the shot is fired. These problems are very easily detected and corrected through dry practice. They are commonly caused by too much shooting and too little dry practice.





## Two Distinct Groups One Center, One High

When shooting controlled pairs, you will have a sight picture before and after the trigger press. Elsewhere in the industry, some teach a "Double tap", which is one sight picture and two quick shots. The first shot is usually a good hit because it was supported by a good sight picture. The second shot generally hits high because the shooter fired it before fully recovering from recoil and verifying a proper sight picture. There is only one correct sequence of shooting, and it requires a proper sight picture for each shot. A controlled pair can be done in just about the same time as a double tap, and you can guarantee your hits.



## Two Distinct Groups One Low, One Center

Shooters firing controlled pairs who have not yet mastered the trigger commonly fire two distinct groups, one low and one centered. It could be the first shot of a controlled pair is fired too soon, as the sights and weapon are moving onto the aiming point. The second shot of this controlled pair is usually a good hit. If the first shot is centered, and the second shot is low, the shooter is rushing the trigger on the second shot. To guarantee a good hit for either shot, slow down the trigger press to guarantee a surprise break. This may be slow at first, but with practice, it can be done in a timely manner.



## **PART FOUR**

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## **Skills Test**

### **Shooting**

Total Shots = 27. Total Points = 135.

Description	Range	Time (sec.)	Max. Points
Single Shot (Body)	100m	5.0	15
Single Shot (Body)	50m	3.0	15
Controlled Pairs (Body)	25m	2.2	30
Single Shot (Head)	25m	2.5	15
Controlled Pairs (Body)	15m	1.7	30
Single Shot (Head)	15m	2.0	15
Failure To Stop	7m	1.4	15

(Timed shots to body; untimed head)

Shooters using bipods in the prone position must put them down as they are going down into position, and put them up when recovering to standing. Shooters who choose to stay in position for all five shots at the 100m line can only qualify for a Certificate of Achievement.

### **Reloads**

Penalty points only; assessed for time or procedure violation. Each reload performed twice.

Description	Time (sec.)	Max. Penalty
Emergency Reload	4.5	-6
Tactical Reload	5.0	-6

## Malfunction Clearances

Penalty points only; assessed for time or procedure violation. Each malfunction clearance performed twice.

Description	Time (sec.)	Max. Penalty
Type 1	1.6	-6
Type 2	1.8	-6
Type 3	Untimed	-6

## Skills Test Scoring

Each shot is worth a possible five (5) points in either the thoracic cavity, or the cranio-ocular cavity, two (2) points are awarded for all other areas inside the target silhouette.

Head shots below the chin line are misses.

Three (3) point penalty for improper procedure or being over time.

27 shots total. 135 points possible.

121-135 points, or -0 to -14 points down, (90-100%) qualifies the student as a Distinguished Graduate.

94-120 points, or -15 to -41 points down, (70-89%) qualifies the student as a Graduate.

93 points or less, or -42 points down or greater, qualifies the student for a Certificate of Achievement.

### NOTES:

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**Updated Front Sight 4 Day Practical Rifle Skills Test (9/2014)**

**7 yds: Failure To Stop – controlled pair from ready to thoracic cavity (1.4 secs), followed by single untimed head shot (3 rds total)**

**15 yds: controlled pairs to thoracic cavity (1.7 secs), one pair from each ready (Ready, High Ready, Field Ready) (6 rds total)**

**15 yds: single compensated headshot (2.0 secs), one from each ready (3 rds total)**

**25 yds: controlled pairs to thoracic cavity (2.2 secs), one pair from each ready (6 rds total)**

**25 yds: single compensated headshot (2.5 secs), one from each ready (3 rds total)**

**50 yds: controlled pairs to thoracic cavity, start from High Ready/Offhand only (3.0 secs), performed twice (4 rds total)**

**100 yds: single shot to thoracic cavity, start from High Ready into Platform of Choice (5.0 secs), performed five times (5 rds total)**

**Total round count for test: 30 rds @ 5 pts per round, 150 pts possible.**

**Malfunctions/Reloads: Tactical Reload (5.0 secs), Type 1 (1.8 secs), Type 2 (2.0 secs), Type 3 (untimed), Emergency Reload (4.5 secs). All performed twice.**



**NOTES:**

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ISBN 978-0-9711266-1-9