



SHOOT-N-IRON Academy



PISTOL BASICS

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During almost any week that passes, Shoot-N-Iron Academy receives several inquires about Basic Pistol Shooting. Many of the folks say they have just acquired their concealed carry SDA license and now have a new handgun. Several say they have used rifles and shotguns, but never before had much to do with pistols. We thought we might pass on a few tips that just may be of value to you.

Do not buy your firearm strictly upon price alone. There are handguns on the market that are about as dangerous to the shooter as they are to the shootee. Some dealers are more interested in making a quick sale instead of helping you find the handgun that you actually need.

A good rule of thumb is that at today's prices, any pistol not costing **\$150** or better just may not be worth taking home and may not do the job you want done. Stick with the major brands in choosing your pistol and you won't go wrong.

The first recommendation we have is that you select a handgun that is right for your purpose. Some of the questions you should consider are (1) What do I want the firearm for? (2) Am I going to carry it on my person or am I just going to carry it in my automobile.... or maybe just keep it at home for protection there? (3) Am I going to use it for just self-defense, or am I going to plink with it or even shoot some type of competition? or all of the above?

Another consideration is: *find a handgun that fits you*. It should fit into your hand comfortably. If you are going to carry the pistol concealed on your person, then the size of the weapon certainly comes into the picture.

The next item for thought is what caliber do I want? The door is wide open on this question. Probably more bad guys have been shot with the little .22 calibers than any other and this is possibly due to more people owning these guns than any other caliber. While the .22's are easy to handle and may be fired a lot at low ammunition cost for practice, plinking, hunting, etc., they are not necessarily what I would choose for self-defense. While not recommending the .25's and .32 calibers, just about any caliber from .22 up through .45 will work.

Learn how your pistol operates. Know where the latches, buttons, and releases are located. All pistols have them and they are not always located in the same places. Learn to load and unload your firearm safely and quickly. One should practice loading and reloading as often as possible. Loading the weapon correctly and quickly on the range or in a defensive situation is a must.

STANCE

In a defensive confrontation stance is not really as important as it would be if you were shooting in competition. When defending one's self you probably will not have time to, consciously, set your feet in a certain stance or position. In target shooting, where real tight, small shot groups are desirable, stance is very important.

When possible, place the weak side or non-shooting side foot approximately 12-inches in front of the strong side foot and spread them approximately 16 to 18 inches apart. Bend the front knee slightly and place about sixty to seventy percent of your weight out over that knee. This will give you a good, balanced stance. Keep your head up and straight on to the target. Your shoulders should be pretty much square to the target.

When shooting with both hands, place the weak or non-shooting hand around the grip from the off side, wrapping the fingers around and over the strong side fingers. Avoid placing the off side thumb up and over the back of the other hand. If shooting a semi-auto, the slide may strike the thumb on recoil. If this should occur, you won't like the resulting slice on top of the thumb.

Accuracy will also be affected with either autos or revolvers. Do not place the weapon and strong hand in the palm of the support or weak hand as this will let the pistol roll during firing, thus causing erratic hits on the target.

GRIP

Place your shooting hand high on the back strap, the rearward portion of the pistol's grip. Extend your trigger finger down the side of the firearm, keeping it outside the trigger guard until you're on target and ready to shoot. Align the web (that portion of the shooting hand located between the thumb and trigger finger) as near straight with the wrist and the firearm as possible. Wrap the fingers around the trip, while applying pressure front and back to the grip.

SIGHT PICTURE

This segment of shooting basics is the most important part of learning to shoot. Whether you're shooting a pistol or rifle, a good sight picture is a must. Your eye must focus on the front sight and it should be sharp and clear in your vision.

The top of the front sight will be placed in the notch of the rear sight which will appear slightly blurred. The top of the front sight should be level with the top of the rear sight and an equal amount of light should be seen on either side of the front sight. The point on the target you wish your bullet to strike would be placed on top of the front sight. The target will be somewhat blurred.

Most misses are caused by the shooter's eyes being focused on the target rather than the front sight.

TRIGGER CONTROL

This part of shooting is probably the second most important operation in shooting. If you are shooting a semi-auto and are in the single action mode, place the pad of the last joint of your trigger finger on the center of the trigger. Avoid letting your finger drag on the floor of the trigger guard as this will cause low points of impact on your target.

If you are shooting double action on either autos or revolvers, place your finger on the trigger at the first knuckle joint of the trigger finger instead of the pad or tip as is done when shooting single action.

Do not yank or jerk the trigger. Apply a steady rearward motion until the gun fires. Avoid pushing across or pulling across the trigger. Both of these errors are very common mistakes. Make sure the pressure you apply on the trigger is straight back and not side to side.

We know the tips we've listed are not the only things that it takes to be a good shot, but they are essential. Always shoot and practice in a place that is designated for such purposes. If you are not now a member of a shooting club, join one. You will enjoy the experience.

Always be sure of your target and what is located beyond. Remember if you fire a shot, the bullet is going to hit something. You surely want it to hit exactly what you desire and nothing else.

Good practice is the key. Shoot a lot and shoot often. If you need help, there are many good people in ORA's affiliated clubs around the state who will be more than happy to help you along the right road to good marksmanship. If by some chance you can not find the help you want, we'll be available. Come see us.
