

ALL AMERICAN FIREARMS TRAINING

# Practical Pistol Shooting Class Handout

Disclaimer: The use of firearms can be dangerous. By reading this material, you agree that you assume any and all risks involved and release All American Firearms Training from any liability whatsoever.

# Three Rules For Safer Gun Handling

1. Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction. Always assume that every gun is loaded, and never point a gun at another person or at anything you would not want to shoot.
2. Always keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.
3. Always keep the gun unloaded until you are ready to use it.

## Shooting Fundamentals: **B.R.A.S.S**

### 1. **Breathe**

Your breathing should be steady, and each time you fire the gun, try to be at the same point in your breathing cycle, whatever is most comfortable for you. For example, some people feel comfortable letting the trigger “break” when they are [briefly] holding their breath after taking a deep breath and exhaling 1/3 of the air out of their lungs.

### 2. **Relax**

You must relax by doing some deep breathing before you shoot, and by thinking positive thoughts. Relax your body and take a comfortable stance relative to the target, holding your gun the same exact way each time and touching the same part of your finger to the trigger. Grip the pistol firmly, as you might shake someone’s hand, but not too hard.

### 3. **Aim**

Remember to **focus on the front sight post**, not so much on the rear sight post or the target. Focus intently on the front sight post, and you will shoot more accurately.

### 4. **Squeeze**

Squeeze the trigger (do not pull it or jerk it) straight back towards your body. This should be a smooth, constant motion. Once you have your sights lined up with the target, start squeezing the trigger firmly until it “breaks” and the shot goes off.

### 5. **Surprise**

You should be surprised when the shot goes off, as you are focused on the front sight post and not on the target, the rear sight post, or on the trigger. Remember, the law of averages says that if your sights are lined up correctly on the target, you will hit it most of the time. So, your main goal is to let the weapon remain aimed at the target while the trigger squeeze is happening.

## Fundamental Components of Shooting a Pistol:

1. Practical Shooting involves the same concepts as are used in many other shooting sports and activities. You need to have:
  - a. Intense focus and concentration
  - b. Attention to detail and an open mind ready to learn
  - c. The willingness and patience to practice mechanical skills until they become second nature and automatic
  - d. Reflection and the ability to learn from mistakes (your own mistakes as well as the mistakes of others)
2. The goal of shooting a gun is to cause a projectile to go into a target area. The process of doing this is:
  - a. Locate the target
  - b. Get the gun on the target
  - c. Keep the gun on the target while you fire the shot
3. Grip: Start with a "handshake" grip on the gun. Get your hand up as high as you can on the grip of the gun. Your grip should be comfortable. Your trigger finger should rest comfortably on the trigger so that you can put straight-line pressure back to the rear (i.e. not off to one side or the other, which would cause a miss). Your thumbs should be on the side of the gun, NOT behind the slide (the slide moves to the rear every time the gun is fired, and will bite your thumb if it's in the way). Grip it as hard as you'd grip a hammer.
4. Stance: Must be comfortable to you. Start with a "runner's" stance (like you were about to race someone on the playground) and experiment from there by making small modifications one at a time.

Grip Techniques (Do what is comfortable for you):



Top and side view of "Thumbs" grip preferred by many shooters today



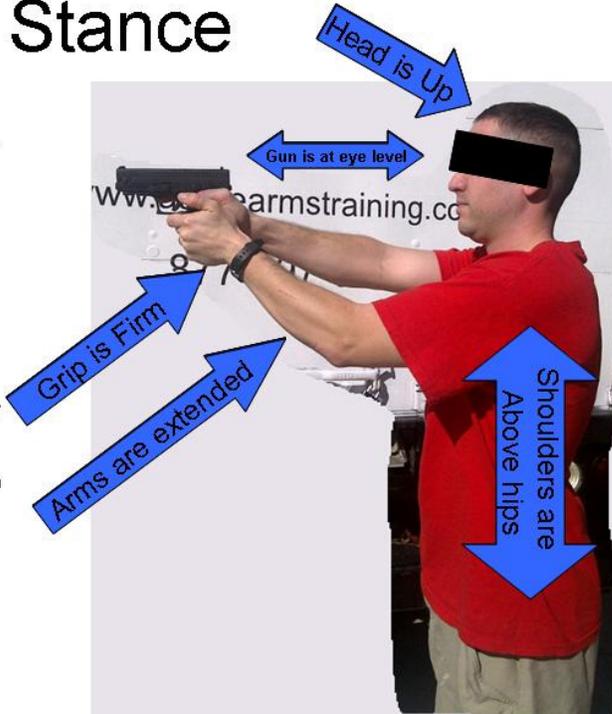
Below: The "Weaver" Grip, with thumbs on top of each other. This is a good grip to start with.



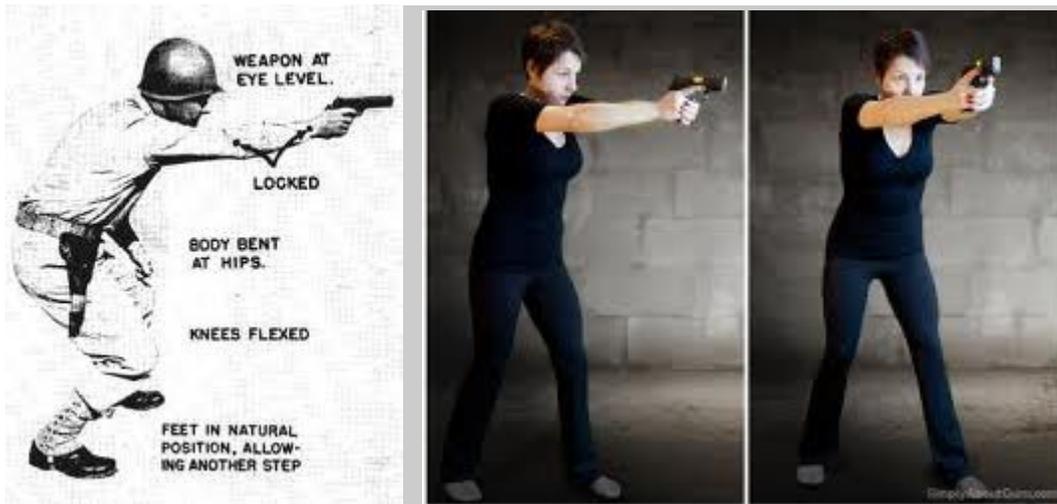
Stance Techniques (Again, do what is comfortable for you):

## Stance

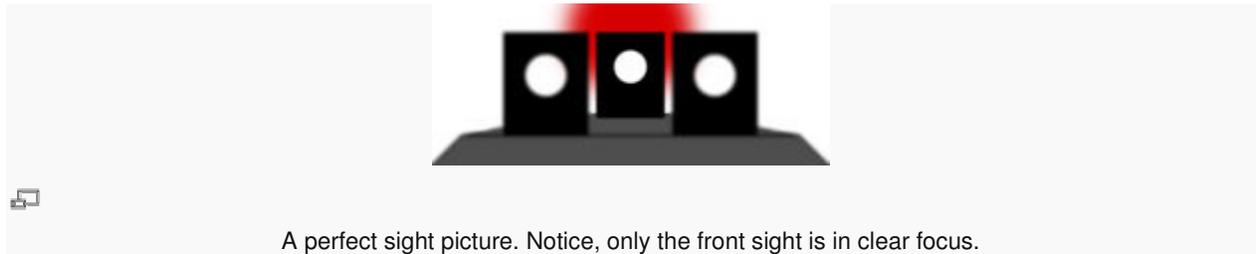
- Extend your arms – they are your “shock absorbers” for recoil.
- Bring the gun up to your eye level, do not “hunch” over to get your eye in front of the sights.
- Spread feet about shoulder width apart. Your feet can point towards the target or slightly outward to the sides.
- Your body can face directly towards the target, or can be turned slightly to one side or the other.



Above: Start with this, then lean forward into the gun in order to better control recoil during rapid firing (examples below).

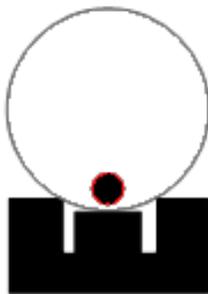


Sight picture:

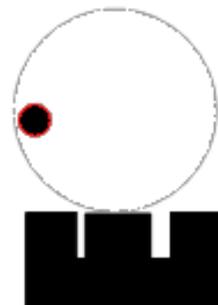
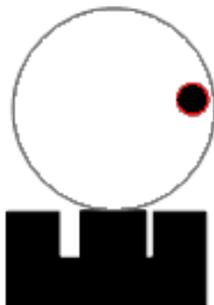


If the sights are aligned and pointed at the target, you will hit it. With a pistol, a small error in sight alignment means you will not hit your target, so pay attention to the **FRONT SIGHT**.

Here are some examples of sight pictures that need improvement:



REMEMBER: YOUR BULLET WILL GO WHEREVER THE FRONT SIGHT GOES. ANY SLIGHT DEFLECTION OR MOVEMENT OF THE FRONT SIGHT WILL RESULT IN A DRAMATIC EFFECT ON WHERE THE BULLET STRIKES THE TARGET.



## The Wheel of Misfortune

Every day of the shooter's life brings a new lesson. Identifying errors are crucial in order that these lessons be learned. The following chart can help pinpoint such basic flaws in a shooter's technique by analyzing group locations. As printed, it is for a right-handed shooter. (A left-hander's chart would be mirrored horizontally.)



### Tips & Tricks

1. You must concentrate with intensity on **THE FRONT SIGHT POST**. When shooting at a high rate of speed, you may not have time to take as much time to line up the sights as when shooting one shot at a time, but you will always have some degree of focus on the sights, more especially on the front sight.
2. Holding Too Long. Any adverse conditions that interrupt a shooter's ability to "hold" will cause him to delay his squeeze, waiting for conditions to better. As soon as you are on target, begin your trigger squeeze

process. If you wait until the sights are in the exact center of the target, you will be doing something counter-productive. By the time your brain receives a signal from your eye, processes the fact that the sights are perfectly aligned, and sends a signal to your finger to squeeze the trigger, it is very unlikely that your sights will still be aligned in the dead center of the target. "Trust your wobble" and focus on smooth trigger squeeze and try to disturb the sights as little as possible while you do it. A hit is a hit. Start your trigger squeeze as soon as the previous round has been fired and you are getting back on target for the next shot. That way as you are lining up, you can just be finishing application of pressure on the trigger.

3. Inconsistent Grip or Position. Your grip has a dramatic effect on the consistency of the position of your trigger finger. Suffice to say that you cannot fire a decent score with any gun at any range if you continually change your grip or position. The same applies to your "draw" technique and the way that you "present" the gun (i.e. the movements that you make in between when you draw the gun and when you take the shot)

4. Finger not placed correctly on the trigger. You must apply pressure to the trigger straight to the rear in order to achieve success. Be certain that the gun is centered in your grip, with your finger resting comfortably on the trigger. If your grip causes your trigger finger to be placed too "deep" into the trigger well or not deep enough (too "shallow"), this can cause you to put more pressure on one side of the trigger than the other, causing deflection of the barrel off to the opposite side and causing a miss or poor performance. Your grip is a habit, and this habit will determine your success or failure! (reference pictures of grips above)

5. Jerk or Heel. The application of pressure either with the trigger finger alone or in case of the heel, pushing with the heel of the hand at the same time. This effect is exaggerated by trying to "rush" your shots.

6. Anticipation. Anticipation can cause muscular reflexes of an instant nature that so closely coincide with recoil that extreme difficulty is experienced in making an accurate call. "Flinching" before the shot is one symptom of anticipation. In order to eliminate anticipation, you must SMOOTHLY move the trigger straight to the rear (pretend like it is rolling along a perfectly straight set of train tracks), and make the trigger "surprise" you to a certain degree when the gun goes off. It shouldn't be a total surprise (you loaded the gun, you pointed it at something, you squeezed the trigger), but you must be increasing trigger pressure smoothly (in other words: slowly) enough that the EXACT MOMENT the gun goes off is not easily predictable to you.

7. Anxiety. Everyone is just as nervous as you are, especially if you are around them at a match. I promise. You need to find something within your mind that you can think of that will bring a sense of peace and

relaxation during stressful moments. Sing a song to yourself in your mind. It's hard to be stressed out while singing "happy birthday."

8. Lack of Follow Through. Follow through is the subconscious attempt to keep everything just as it was at the time the shot broke. In other words you are continuing to fire the shot even after it is gone. Follow through is not to be confused with recovery. Merely recovering and holding on the target after the shot is no indication that you are following through. Think of this as what a pitcher does each time he throws the ball – he always ends up in the same consistent position after the pitch, which helps with his consistency in placing the ball inside the "strike zone." Basketball free-throw shooters, who depend on a high percentage of well-aimed shots, also place a large emphasis on follow-through; you can see them hold their hands in a "follow-through" position for several seconds after they release the ball (obviously you don't have the luxury of several seconds, just a split second, but you get the point). This is the part of performance that helps you to keep the gun on target while the shot goes off; if you have good follow-through techniques, your performance will be better.

If you have any questions or need more help, call 877-697-6446 ext # 1 or e-mail us at [aafirearmstraining@gmail.com](mailto:aafirearmstraining@gmail.com). We are always happy to teach you or anyone else about shooting. Visit our web site at:

<http://www.allamericangunsmith.com>