

The Ultimate Bullseye Primer

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Precision Shooting

1. Identify your target
2. Watch the front sight (Red Dot)
3. Press the trigger smoothly straight to the rear

Do #2 and #3 at the same time [*Frank Higginson*]

Sounds simple; doesn't it?

1. Identify your target. Look at your port number and color. Then look down range before you lift your gun and identify the same number and color. It is real easy to cross fire onto someone else's target. You lose 10 points per shot. It is very embarrassing to cross fire. (Believe me I know.) If someone cross fires on your target, be a good sport and ask to re-fire the target. You have that right. (If you shoot better on the alibi you can only get the highest points on the first target.) The competitor should have a range officer check the target if the competitor disagrees, but don't let him/ her change your mind. Call them as you see them. Do not be intimidated!
Cross firing- there are 2 kinds of people: those that have and those that will.
2. Watch your front sight. Stare at your front sight or red dot, 100% focus. See the scratches on the front sight. See the imperfections on the red dot.
3. Press the trigger smoothly straight to the rear. Apply even pressure to keep the trigger moving to the rear. In rapid fire you have 2 seconds to move the trigger to the rear smoothly and fire the shot. You have a minute a shot in slow fire. Use the time to focus on the next shot. Don't stop moving the trigger. That is called "playing with the trigger" or "chicken finger". That will get you into trouble.

Scores

Scores are the results of groups. Everything we do on paper targets is the result of groups. Groups show your wobble area.

When scoring somebody else's target, score accurately. Use an overlay and don't give points away if the shooter did not shoot them. Let the competitor whine and cry and make such a fuss. I never lower my standards. It's not fair to all the other shooters. Why have a match if everyone scores a 100 on each target?

I don't want anyone to score my target higher than what I shot. It isn't sporting or fair to the others.

Once you are labeled a cheater, you lose the respect of everyone.

If you disagree with the score the person gave you, go first to the person who scored the target and then to a range officer if you still have a problem. Never go to the referee first. Then if you are still not satisfied that your target was scored correctly go to the referee. You may have to give him/her \$2 to challenge the score, but if you win the challenge you get your \$2.00 back.

Wobble Area

Wobble area is the area your barrel is moving around when it is extended out. Pretend to have a zillion power laser on the barrel of your pistol. The wobble area would be the part that is all burnt on the paper target. Put a blank paper behind your target. Never change the blank paper. At the end of the match or training look at the blank paper and you can see your wobble area. Your wobble area is the same size as the groups you have just shot.

Wobble area increases or decreases with training, eating, stress, drugs and smoking.

You have to accept your wobble area. It is not going to get any better at the given time you are about to shoot. Your wobble area may increase or decrease as the match goes on. I find as my muscles get warmed up and stretched out during the match my wobble area decreases. I like to fire 10 rounds or so of air pistol in my basement before I travel to a match. I set the trigger to the same weight as the firearm I am about to shoot.

Gripping the Gun

To Correctly position the gun in your shooting hand:

1. Hold the gun in your non-shooting hand by the barrel. Don't put your hand in front of the barrel.
2. Observe on your shooting hand the space between your thumb knuckle and pointing finger knuckle- this is the web of your hand.
3. Take your shooting hand and place the web area firmly into the top of the grip, snug against the frame or beaver tail on some 45's.
4. Take your bottom 3 fingers and wrap them around the grip.
5. Take your shooting finger and lay it on the side of the frame.
6. Force your thumb around to the other side of the gun.
7. Then relax your grip when the guns on the bench.
8. Hold the gun like a handshake when your ready to shoot.

Rules

It is the competitors responsibility to know the rules. Here are some rules that are good to know.

Whatever classification you have attained, you can shoot that class in ANY Indoor/Outdoor NRA competition. For example: You have made marksman in indoor pistol shooting therefore you can shoot any NRA match; pistol, small bore, high power etc. in marksman class.

Look at each target before you hang them. Look for holes, the proper target for that event; slow, timed, rapid, the correct distance target. Make sure your name or competitor number is on each target, when required.

Score your targets as you pull them to verify posted scores.

Outdoors make sure the score on the scoresheet is correct. Check addition.

Verify your scores in the time allotted to make sure they are correct. Believe me when I tell you how frustrating it is to shoot better than you ever have and find the posted scores are wrong and the time limit is up to challenge it.

Muscle Memory

One can never practice enough. Muscle memory is only accomplished by live firing, dry firing or air pistol practice. Limit your dry firing and air pistol practice to 30 minutes to avoid burnout and boredom. Lifting a weight every day and holding the weight in your shooting position for 90 seconds builds your shooting muscles. You should do the same exercise with your weak hand to balance your muscles. Exercise is very important. Aerobic exercise can be done on the day of a match. Body building, free weights and nautilus type machines should be avoided up to 3 days before a match. Push-ups can be done early in the day, if you have a night match. Advanced athletes should do up to 25 push-ups every day, 5 days a week. Aerobics are great to calm yourself and keep in shape. Bringing your heart rate up twenty minutes a day, three days a week is minimum to keep the heart in good shape. Stair steppers, walking, running, step aerobics, ski machines, bicycles, and stationary bicycle machines are a few ways to do aerobics. If you build up your health, you will be less stressed under match conditions and you won't fatigue.

Everything Effects Your Shooting

Eat light at least two hours before a match. No Caffeine, sugar, chocolate, fats or smoking. It is hard not to eat or drink the stuff that tastes so good, but think of the good taste of shooting a tight group. 2700's start early and run until mid afternoon. You should eat a light lunch. I eat a banana and a bagel. Also bring plenty of water for summer matches. Stretching your muscles before and during a match helps relax your muscles and mind.

Do Not stop your normal routine the day of a match. For example, if you have 3 cups of coffee in the morning continue to have them. You could experience withdrawal symptoms if you decide not to follow your regular routine.

Shooting To Win

One theory is to "see" yourself shooting in "real time". Picture yourself walking up to the line, setting up your gun box, preparing your equipment and mind to shoot. Identify your target. See yourself shooting each perfect shot in slow, timed and rapid fire. Visualize yourself winning the match. Now you just have to go through the routine.

Identify your target. Pickup up the gun by the barrel with your non-shooting hand and correctly position it in your shooting hand. Raise the gun slightly above the target with your finger off the trigger. Slowly lower your arm to the black of the target. "See" the front sight (red dot). " See" your wobble area. Accept your wobble area. Don't fight it. If the wobble area has sharp corners or choppy movements, you are fighting your wobble area. Your wobble area should be rounded. (This is easier to notice with a red dot sight.) Feel the gun relaxed in your hand (like a handshake). Stop breathing. Start pressing on the trigger without disturbing the sights. Keep the trigger moving. When the shot breaks you should be surprised. Then follow through. This means watch the movement of the sights or red dot as it moves from the recoil. Call your shot.

Good scores aren't hard. Good scores flow free. *[Storrs Dutko]*

Match Jitters

Yes, we all know match jitters. The butterflies in the stomach. The feeling you're going to pee your pants. How do you deal with it?

Well everyone gets match jitters. It's normal. It took me 3 years not be nervous during the local Wednesday night matches.

I still get them at Camp Perry during the Team matches. Shooting with top shooters like Charlie Gippert and the others on the top team really can put the pressure on you, if you let it.

How do you deal with it? Joking around really helps!

You have to compete in every match you can. You have to tell yourself, "been there, done that".

You have to tell yourself, "I have done this so many times before, I know how to do this. Open my mind. Set my mind free."

Do stretching exercises before and during the match.

Breathe slow at least 4 breaths before each shot in slow fire. Breathe in through your nose and slowly blow out through your mouth making a blowing sound you can hear. It's relaxing.

Do the best you can. You can't ask for anything more.

Good scores are a product of relaxation of muscles and mind! The next Shot is all that matters.

The next shot is all that matters. The last shot is history. It doesn't matter anymore, done, finished, gone...The next shot is all that matters!!! Open your mind. Set your mind free.

Comfort Zone

We all know our average. When we start to shoot higher than it, we leave our comfort zone. Our pulse gets heavier, our wobble area gets big. Wammo, the shot gets thrown. Ahhhh, we feel better. We are back to our comfort zone. Ah, Bullshit to the comfort zone. You have practiced long and hard to hit those 10's. You expect to hit them. You can do them all day long. That's what I expect. That's what I trained for. That's what I will do.

Mounting A Scope On A .45

The scope should be mounted as low as possible. Mounting it on the slide is the way to go. Frame mounted scopes will not be accurate when the slide, lug and rails start to wear. The top shooters have them on the slide.

Working out, eating right, and dryfiring, a half hour a day, and of course if you can live fire, will get your scores up. When you shoot your 45, say to yourself during timed and rapid, "keep the trigger moving".

Dropping The Slide On A .45

Don't drop the slide on a precision .45 without a magazine and round in it. Let the slide down slowly. If you don't you will elongate the lugholes, which will damage the barrel to frame rail or fracture the lug, which can cause more damage, depending on when??? it fractures.

Tips

Is your dot not as bright as you want it? How old are those batteries? Keep them fresh for outdoor matches where the sun is very bright.

Do you put your finger fully into the trigger housing wrapped around the trigger? Use the tip of your finger to press the trigger to the rear. The trigger pull feels lighter as you cam the trigger. You are using leverage when you do this.

Muscle memory is a big part of shooting. Your mind and muscles remember what to do at a subconscious level. You think the shots into the center.

Follow through is very important. Watching the front site with 100 % focus is the most important, with the proper trigger movement. (Smooth, 8 seconds or less for slow fire, 4 seconds or less for each timed fire shot, 2 seconds for each rapid fire shot.) You must be able to call your shots, meaning where the shot should be on the target after you shoot it, even on rapid fire. I should be able to walk up to you and ask you, "Where did the third shot hit on the first string?" and you should be able to answer me.

After slow fire, use a timer to look at seconds to get your mind set for 2 seconds. Tap your finger or foot to the 2 seconds or press against something like your pressing the trigger.

You will accidentally fire an early shot. It is part of the learning process.

You may see the "hotshots" break an early shot by accident.

You have to focus on shooting when the guy next to you shoots early. It's hard to do.

Do not use shock buffers in the 1911. It's rubber or plastic and when it falls apart it jams the gun.

How To Analyze Your Performance

1. Did I shoot on the correct target?
2. Did I "see" my front sight?
3. How "focused" was I during the shot?
4. Did I "call" the shot?
5. Did I keep the trigger moving or did I "play" with the trigger?
6. How big was my wobble area?
7. Timed and rapid: how was my timing?
8. Did I keep the trigger moving smoothly?
9. Did I let anything distract me, such as shots in the white, someone else's early shot etc?

10. Did my equipment work okay? Did I have all the accessories I needed?
11. Was I a good sport whether I won or lost?
12. Where were my groups and how big were they?
13. Did I get the first shot off quickly during rapid fire? Meaning, did I have enough trigger pressure applied when the targets turned or when I heard the horn or buzzer.
14. Did I have the right clothing to keep warm or dry?
15. How did my ammo perform?

Equipment

You need a good Bullseye gun. A rimfire firearm is good to start with because you need a rimfire firearm for most matches. The ammo can be inexpensive and you don't have to reload. Buying a used target gun is usually a good idea. Buying equipment is a vicious cycle until you learn from your mistakes or learn from someone that's been there before. This is what usually happens:

1. New shooter buys a \$250+ firearm. . Next they need a trigger job \$75+ and firearm is at the gunsmith for three months. Grips \$50, magazines, \$20 each times 4 = \$80. So far the total is easily reaching \$455.
2. New shooter now looks around and sees the other shooters shooting the "Plasma smorf fantastic racing shooting machines," and the new shooter wants one.
3. New shooter puts their perfectly good firearm on the market so the they can upgrade to the perceived better firearm.
4. Educated new shooter finds "built" firearms for great prices. You can only sell your firearm for blue book or going rates in the area. You might have sunk \$200 dollars into a \$300 gun. Don't think your going to sell that firearm for \$500 dollars.
5. New Shooter finds the new "Plasma smorf fantastic racing shooting machine" shoots as well as their last firearm.

Another option is to save and shell out the \$475 or less and buy a used Smith and Wesson 41, or a High Standard Victor, Supermatic, or other High Standard 107 Frame built in the Hamden, Connecticut plant or a Ruger Bull barrel firearm that's been already "built". Note: Rugers are hard to disassemble.

If you can afford the fancy smancy guns and are serious about Bullseye Shooting then the Pardini, Hammerly 208S and Walther are the usual choices but once you own one you can't use the excuse "must be something wrong with the gun".

One mistake that many shooters make is that they need a long barrel to make the firearm more accurate. The bullet accelerates fastest in the first inch and a half. The longer the bullet stays in the barrel the more likely you can move the firearm away from the point you "broke" the shot. Don't forget the gases leaving the barrel still effect the shot passing around and behind the bullet. This can cause tumbling bullets. Follow through is important.

You will need a gun box so you can keep all shooting equipment in one place. Supplies you will need are:

- Screwdriver
- Allen wrenches
- Cleaning rod
- Shooting diary
- Pen
- Extra batteries for red dots scopes
- Scoring overlays and plugs
- Rule book
- Shooting glasses (indoor-yellow tint and outdoor-darker tint)
- Earmuffs (I use earplugs and earmuffs, called double plugging)
- Magazines
- One inch surgical tape
- Garbage bag (when it rains outside you place the bag over your box)
- Wooden or brass rod just in case the bullet takes a nap in your barrel (push the bullet out the way it came in)
- Spare parts

I take it back, you don't need a gun box, you need a pick up truck to carry all this stuff around.

Did I remember AMMO?

Ammo

Indoors is very forgiving for accuracy because your only shooting 50 or 75 feet. Outdoors at 50 yards you find out which ammo shoots tight. Try different brands.

.22 Caliber

General rule is don't use Remington or Winchester Rimfire ammo. They aren't reliable to go bang each time. I have seen many misfires due to these brand 22's. I use R.W.S. Target ammo from Grice Gun Shop. I pay about \$250 per case of 5000 rounds. I like to buy a case of ammo (5,000 rounds) because all the bricks (500 rounds) are from the same lot. Same lot means all the rounds are made the same. This matters at 50 yards.

.38 Caliber

SLOW FIRE 50 YARDS:

- Bullet head- 148 grain H.B.W.C. (Hollow Base Wad Cutter) from Zero
- Powder- 3.1 grains W.S.T. (Winchester Super Target)
- Primers- CCI primers
- Brass- Winchester

NOTE: Wind affects the trajectory of the 38 more than the 45 at 50 yards

INDOORS AND 25 YARD TIMED AND RAPID (SHORT LINE) LOAD:

- Bullet head- Zero in mixed cases
- Powder- 2.5 grain W.S.T. (Winchester Super Target)
- Primers- CCI Primers
- Brass- mixed

.45 Caliber

SLOW FIRE 50 YARDS:

- Factory Federal Match 185 GRAIN- Semi Wad Cutter

INDOORS AND 25 YARD TIMED AND RAPID (SHORT LINE) LOAD:

- Bullet head -200 lead S.W.C. (Semi-Wad Cutter) from Accucast
- Powder- 4.1 grains Powder W.S.T. (Winchester Super Target) made by Winchester
- Primers - CCI primers
- Brass – mixed for 50 ft, Federal for big matches and 25 yards

Note: Never vacuum primers and powder as the primers may explode and start a fire. (Not to mention that they are loud when they explode.)

Supplies

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