

The True Fundamentals

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I have been fortunate to meet and shoot with many of the "legends" of shooting over the past number of years. Being young with a thirst for knowledge and the "secret" of shooting, I was always tugging at their pant legs.

It didn't take too long to realize that all these great shooters had one thing in common. They all mastered the fundamentals of shooting. And they all had no secret.

I grew to know many shooters who have the ability to shoot any type of pistol in any type of match and- WIN. On some days I thought they could shoot a capgun on one leg in a gale and still win.

I shot for many years with Don Hamilton who I grew to love and respect like a dad. It was through this relationship that I had access to the "gods of shooting" It always amazed me how anybody could shoot a 560 with a free pistol on Saturday and a 2640 on Sunday. However, this is common for these shooters, for they have mastered the fundamentals.

If you really think about it, shooting is shooting regardless of what you shoot -- this is the concept these shooters have grasped which most others have not.

You can ask any great shooter from anywhere on the globe and I am sure that they will tell you "sight alignment" and "trigger control" are the most important aspect in their successful shooting.

Now I know many have expounded volumes on topics like grip, stance, breathing, etc etc, etc. However, these are not fundamentals.

A fundamental is a process by which "all" shooters must perform in the same way to achieve a result. In this case a center shot. Regardless of age, body size and strength, right hand, left hand, male or female. If you cannot align the sight and control the trigger. You may win at you local sand pit or whatever but you will never be a "master" of shooting a pistol.

I teach precision shooting to many clubs and individuals to support my shooting habit. It never ceases to amaze how many shooters will spend hundreds of dollars on some do-dad to try and gain five point in a NMC when they could spend two hours of their time and gain ten points. Don't get me wrong there is nothing wrong about having nice stuff. I just think like a house must have a solid foundation before it can have a fancy kitchen so should shooters have a firm understanding of how to shoot a proper shot.

Getting back to the Gods of shooting. If you only knew how different some styles of shooting were like Free Pistol and Center Fire and Hardball you would have to wonder how any one person could be a champion in all three, there are many shooters who do this, there are more than you think. For them it is easy, It's just shooting. They approach each gun, match and championship, weather it be a state, regional, national, international or Olympic championship. Just shooting to them.

The other things like grip, stance, etc are all important, but only in a supporting role, they help sight alignment and trigger control but they are so individualized that for ten shooters there are ten ways to do each one, not like a fundamental. If you watch a group of masters shoot you will see what I mean.

These other supporting aspect of shooting are techniques. Lets take sustained fire for instance since it was a recent topic on the list. Some shooters say shoot at the buzzer, turn of the target, some say shoot slow, make the first one count. Some try to use all the time and so on. Well all that is great, but what happens to your plan if the sights are out of line, a poor shot for sure.

In techniques there is no right or wrong way to teach since we are all different in some ways, have different bodies, strengths etc. But we all must align the sights and control the trigger. I offer many ideas about techniques in class but never tell anyone one is better than the other. A good shooter will try them all and find the one which gives the best result, results after all are what this game is all about. Remember the scoreboard says nothing about how you stood and how hard you held the gun. It does show if you had good trigger control and sight alignment.

Chances are if you are a High Master in one gun you have the ability to shoot any gun you pick up very well. I guess I have told all my secrets. Hope this helps someone shoot a little better.

Greg Derr