

The Modern Techniques of Shooting

DVC

Diligentia Vis Celeritas

Diligentia Vis Celeritas, Latin for "accuracy, power, speed" is the defacto motto of the Modern Technique and of practical shooting in general. An accurate shot is useless if delivered too slowly or with an insufficient blow. A powerful blow delivered too late or which does not hit the target is likewise useless, as is a quickly delivered but inaccurate or weak blow.

All of the modern techniques, whether for the pistol, rifle, or shotgun are based on what has come to be called **The Triad**. This consists of the three equal and interconnected principles of gun handling, mind set, and marksmanship, all of which must be learned through proper training and practice.

Gun Handling - This is the safe and efficient use, presentation, and maintenance of one's firearms.

Marksmanship - This is the ability to hit one's target quickly and accurately.

Mindset - This is the key to "crisis management" and the ability to hit one's target while under pressure. Failure to think correctly about personal armed combat or situations of possible danger, or to learn the doctrine and techniques for their management leaves your survival or success to pure chance.

Please note that while I offer some book recommendations on the subject, that the modern technique can only be properly learned by actually shooting under a competent instructor.

If you are interested in learning proper shooting skills you can [click here](#) to get information on some recommended places for instruction.

| [The Modern Technique of the Pistol](#) | [The Modern Technique of the Rifle](#) | [The Modern Technique of the Shotgun](#) |

The Modern Technique of the Pistol



The modern technique of the pistol is founded on the following principles.

The Weaver Stance - The modern shooting stance used with the pistol is the "Weaver" stance. While it is generally attributed to Jack Weaver and Jeff Cooper in the late 60s, J. Henry Fitzgerald demonstrated what would be easily recognized as today's Weaver stance in the early 1930s. The Weaver Stance is sometimes thought of as simply two-handed shooting. However, in its modern form it is a specific form of two-handed shooting which uses isometric tension to provide recoil control and a stable and versatile shooting platform for the pistol. It allows rapid acquisition and target engagement with a powerful sidearm.

The presentation - This is the drawing technique utilized to allow the swift, consistent, and safe presentation of the pistol, which in turn allows the rapid and accurate delivery of hits on the target. It involves smoothness and a precise procedure to accomplish its goal.

The flash sight picture - Sight alignment is simply the proper alignment of the front and rear sights which enable the target to be hit. If the sights are not utilized the chances that a target will be missed increase exponentially as the range increase past touching distance. The flash sight picture provides an almost instantaneous verification of the sight's alignment prior to discharging the pistol.

The surprise break - As with the use of the sights the manipulation of the trigger is also important. The surprise break is simply the application of a smooth squeezing of the trigger but done in a highly compressed time interval. The trigger is not "jerked" or "mashed," it is pressed smoothly but very quickly.

The heavy-duty big-bore semiautomatic pistol - To terminate the threat of a human attacker requires a powerful blow. The science of wound ballistics (some firearms media "experts" to the contrary) shows us that the best way to achieve immediate incapacitation of an adversary to make the biggest diameter and deepest permanent hole as possible. While some suggest that a medium caliber (9mm/.38, both of which are actually .35") with an expanding bullet can be used successfully, expanding bullets often fail to expand leaving you with a smaller than desired or hoped for hole. Thus it is better to start off with a bullet that is closer to the diameter you'd like the small one to expand to, rather than to rely on expansion to save your bacon. "Big bore" is considered to be .40 caliber or greater. The semiautomatic pistol has been shown over the years to be the most efficient way to deliver a powerful blow in a lethal confrontation, especially when confronted with multiple attackers.

"The Pistol. Learn it well; wear it always!" - Jeff Cooper

The blued-steel Colt
The new steel Colt
She runs to stunts erratic
For she's a darn
Tough arm to learn
This Army automatic.

Yet when you get to know this arm
and how to coax and pet her,
She'll do her duty like a charm

No Gun will serve you better
She'll stick right closely by your
side
And as the fight grows hotter
And you are caught in battle's
tide--
You'll thank your stars you've got
her.

The lusty Colt, The trusty Colt,
The weapon democratic,
Whose vicious might
Makes men one height--
The Army automatic.

--Songs of the Training Camps

For additional information on the modern technique of the pistol I suggest the following books.

Some of the Answer, Handgun - by Jim Crews. Available directly from: Jim Crews, Marksman's Enterprise, PO Box 556, Stevensville, Montana, 59870, \$29.95 post paid.

The Modern Technique Of The Pistol, by Gregory Boyce Morrison with Jeff Cooper Editorial Advisor, Gunsite Press, Paulden, AZ, 1991, ISBN 0-9621342-3-6 (Out of print)



The Modern Technique of the Rifle



The modern technique of the rifle is simply (SURPRISE!) the old fashion shooting skills of riflery. In this age of either extreme specialization or abject mediocrity the modern technique is simply using a general purpose rifle to achieve first round rifle hits at unknown ranges, from braced and unbraced positions, in the shortest possible time frame. (It could be added that in time of war or siege that you need to be able to do this without getting yourself killed, or at least getting plenty of them before they get you.) If we were to break down the "modern" technique into it's component parts we would get:

The Useful Rifle - A compact, handy, and rugged *general purpose* rifle of medium bore (.28 (7mm) to .32 caliber) that can be used to effectively engage targets of up to about 400 kg (880 pounds), from extreme close range to the limits of the shooter's visibility. This is as opposed to the specialized rifle

suitable for only one specific task, or one of such weight and size as to be generally unmanageable over extended periods of time or difficult terrain. (i.e., "scouts," and classic sporter rifles would be considered "useful;" specialized heavy barreled varmint rifles, 15 pound "sniper rifles", other specialty rifles are not--or are at least *much* less so. Most agree that nine pounds or so (sighted, loaded, and slung) is about the limit for usefulness and that lighter is handier. However, the basic techniques used with "useful" rifles can be transferred in the most part to the use of those other specialized types.)

Shooting Positions - The knowledge and proper use of the various braced and unbraced positions, including the use of a sling to achieve hits on target in the minimum amount of time possible. Modern slings are of the fast "loop up" variety such as the "CW" or Ching Sling, or others which allow a practiced person to loop up in about a second. Shooting positions and the use of the sling, when learned and used properly, can dramatically increase the hitting ability of the shooter in the field.

Knowledge of Ballistics - Knowing the trajectory and performance limits of the ammunition being used will allow securing effective first round hits out to the limits of visibility. This includes zeroing the rifle for the longest range zero that will not required a hold-over or hold-under for the majority of shots. Most individuals zero their rifles at much too short a range. As an example a 150gr .308 Winchester has an optimum zero range of about 225 yards. This zero will place the bullet's path at not more that about 3" from the line of sight from the muzzle out to about 275 yards and about 7" low at 300 yards.

Of course all of this is bound together within the Triad of gunhandling, marksmanship, and mind set.

If you are interested in some basic ballistics knowledge [click here](#) to go to Fr. Frog's ballistics pages.

Information on the scout rifles and the Steyr Scout Rifle is available at: www.steyrscout.org

For additional information on the modern technique of the rifle I suggest the following books.

The Art of the Rifle, by Jeff Cooper, Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, 1997, ISBN 0-87364-931-1

Some of the Answer, Urban Carbine - by Jim Crews. Available directly from: Jim Crews, Marksman's Enterprise, PO Box 556, Stevensville, Montana, 59870. \$29.95 post paid.



The Modern Technique of the Shotgun



The modern offensive/defensive technique of the shotgun is based on three principles: The fitting of proper sights and their use; the "zone system" of ranging; and the proper selection of ammunition, and the knowledge of the shotgun's performance (patterning and grouping) with the ammunition being used.

Sights - The typical fighting shotgun has been historically fitted with the standard bead front sight as used by generations of shotgunners for wing shooting. While this arrangement may work well for the wing shot, it does not work effectively in the antipersonnel role. A bird or clay target can be brought down with relatively few hits by small diameter pellets. Thus, a wing shot merely points the shotgun at the target using the bead as a reference, follows through, and relies upon the spread of the shot to get a hit. However, the termination of the actions of a human assailant requires the delivery of a powerful blow. Therefore, what is needed is to deliver the maximum blow possible by obtaining the maximum number of penetrating hits well centered on the target. To accomplish this consistently requires the use of sights and the sight of choice on the shotgun is what is called the Ghost Ring Sight. This is really nothing more than a thick flat-topped front sight blade used with a *large* opening, thin rimmed rear aperture sight mounted close to the eye. In use it is amazingly fast and precise. Using the ghost ring system consistent hits can be obtained on human sized targets out to slightly past 125 yards when shooting slugs from a typical combat shotgun.

The Zone System - While the use of sights will enable a target to be hit, a method is needed to help determine the optimum engagement distances for the ammunition used. The zone system sets up bands of weapon performance versus ammunition selection. The first or "A" zone extends from the muzzle to about seven yards, where the pattern has expanded to between four and seven inches. Within this range the shot charge is effectively a single projectile and it is quite easy to miss a human sized target unless sights are used. The "B" zone extends from the end of the "A" zone to that range where charge of buckshot has spread to about the width of the human torso (about twenty inches). This occurs at a range of between twenty to thirty-five yards for most weapons. Past end of the "B" zone, even with modern buffered loads and hardened buckshot the shot charge spreads so much that the majority of pellets may not strike the target that is aimed at. This area is called the "C" zone and this is where the rifled slug comes into play along with a "select slug" drill that provides for the rapid switching to a slug round with a shotgun loaded with buckshot when a C zone target appears.

Ammunition selection - Several noted gunsmiths who are familiar with shotguns have stated that the patterning or grouping ability of shotgun barrels is 1/10 gunsmithing and 9/10s magic. Barrels with effectively identical internal and external dimensions and chokes will give widely varying performances with different shot sizes, loadings, and brands. This is especially true with slugs where a barrel can show a three to five inch difference in group size simply by changing the brand of slugs. Some ammunition types such as the reduced velocity Federal and Remington "Tactical" buckshot loads generally give reduced pattern diameter in just about every weapon they are fired in. However, there are always exceptions. Thus, it is extremely important to zero and pattern your shotgun with the actual ammunition that will be used. This will allow determination of the zones for the ammunition/shotgun combination.

Of course all of this is bound together within the Triad of gunhandling, marksmanship, and mind set.

The following was posted on the wall of Jeff's armory.

"The Colonel loves his twelve gauge
It hits so very hard
"That when he shoots his enemies
It tears them all apart

It blows off chunks of tissue
And leaves their clothing red
It leaves them ripped and shattered
And almost always dead

It vaporizes muscle
It pulverizes bone
Yet shotguns are the weapons
That even yuppies own

They claim they only use them
For shooting ducks and skeet
But when you're stuck, a load of buck
Turns predators to meat

Bill O'Connor

For additional information on the modern technique of the shotgun I suggest the following books.

Some of the Answer, Shotgun - by Jim Crews. Available directly from: Jim Crews, Marksman's Enterprise, PO Box 556, Stevensville, Montana, 59870. \$39.95 post paid.

The Defensive Shotgun, by Lewis Awerbuck, Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, ISBN 0-87947-412-2



Some Additional Reading

The books mentioned above, deal primarily with the techniques of firearms usage. For additional reading on the subject of tactics and tactical thinking you may want to consider the following books.

From behind the Line--Technical Notes and Commentary, by Jim Crews. Available directly from: Jim Crews, Marksman's Enterprise, PO Box 556, Stevensville, Montana, 59870. \$29.95 post paid. If you train people (and even if you don't) YOU NEED THIS BOOK. Highly recommended.

Principles of Personal Defense, by Jeff Cooper, Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, 1989, ISBN 0-87364-497-2

Real-World Survival, by Walt Rauch, Rauch & Co. Ltd., Lafayette Hill, PA, 1998, ISBN 0-9663260-0-8

Street Survival--Tactics for Armed Encounters, by R. Adams, T. McTernan, and C. Rosenberg, Calibre Press, Evanston, Ill, 1980, ISBN 0-935978-00-9

Fighting Smarter, by Tom Givens, Range Master, Memphis, TN, 2000, no ISBN, (Available from, Rangemaster, 2611 S. Mendenhall, Memphis, TN, 38115, 901-370-5600, <http://www.rangemaster.com>, \$24.95 plus \$4.00 shipping)

The "Color Code"

One of the techniques taught students at Gunsite is the "color code" which gives you the tool to alter your mental state and to put you in the right mindset for a given situation. To read more about the color code [click here](#).

So Just How Good Are You?

If you want to check your skill level there are several good courses of fire you can try. Anyone who does well on any of these tests on two separate occasions has probably got their act together. [Click here](#) for information on these drills.

A final thought. Lot's of folks think that the high speed, low drag, ninja stuff, and fancy equipment is what they just have to have to be "good." They are wrong! Before even considering advanced tactics and techniques, you need to get the basics down first, and get them down to the point where you don't even have to think about what you need to do. The Modern Technique" is just that, getting the basics in place and setting the foundations that will carry you through your post graduate degree.

Photo Credits

Colt M1911A1 pistol and Mossberg 590GR from their respective catalogs
Jeff Cooper's #3 Scout on Ruger 77 Ultralight with Ruger rib - copyright © 1992 John Schaefer

Please email comments to Fr. Frog by [clicking here](#).

| [Back to the Jeff Cooper Page](#) | [Back to Fr. Frog's Home Page](#) |
