



SAGA Snippets

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Understanding Fine Motor Skills

by Sheriff Jim Wilson
20 November 2024

When we are under severe stress, such as when the fight-or-flight syndrome kicks in, one of the body functions that is severely impaired is our fine motor skills. That is, the ability to use our fingers to perform what prior to the stress have been simple functions. We get fumble-fingered and simple, easy tasks are no longer simple and easy.

This is the reason that we teach defensive students to use their whole hand, whenever possible, in operating their firearm. Instead of using the thumb, or other finger, to activate the slide release on a pistol, we recommend that they use the whole hand, grasping the top of the slide, in front of the rear sight and pulling it to the rear and release.

In my days as a PPC shooter it was common practice to use the support-hand thumb to punch the empties from the revolver cylinder. We now teach the shooter to smack the ejector rod with the palm of the hand because it is a much more positive, effective move and does not require fine motor skills to accomplish.

This loss of fine motor skills is why reloading a revolver can be so difficult in the middle of an actual gunfight, and it creates that problem regardless of whether the shooter is reloading by hand, with a speed loader or with a speed strip. In every instance the shooter is performing the reloading function using their fingers.

Obviously, we can't operate a firearm, any kind of firearm, without using our fingers to one extent or another. The solution is to study our technique and find ways to avoid using the fingers whenever possible, thus minimizing our tendency to fumble.

The second solution is to practice those uses of the fingers that are unavoidable. The revolver shooter should spend a lot of time working on reloading skills, turning those moves into a habit. The semi-automatic shooter would be well advised to spend a good deal of time practicing the reload and returning the slide to battery.

Some would argue that they are able to do all sorts of quick and handy things with their fingers during a shooting match. And I would point out that, while they are under stress, the fight-or-flight syndrome has not kicked in. The simple fact is that no one is shooting at them.

So it is important for the defensive shooter to understand what happens to the human body when the fight-or-flight syndrome occurs, particularly regarding the loss of fine motor skills. Understanding that, he or she can find ways to avoid using their fingers as much as possible. And they can practice, practice, practice those moves when the fingers simply must be used.

<https://www.shootingillustrated.com/content/understanding-fine-motor-skills/>

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Special points of interest:

- *Understanding Fine Motor Skills*
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- *Focus on SAGA Insignia*
- *Casually Concealed*

Want to Improve Your Accuracy? Get a Grip

<https://www.shootingillustrated.com/content/want-to-improve-your-accuracy-get-a-grip/>

by Chris Cypert
13 November 2024

Go to any class or observe anyone teaching anyone else to shoot and you're likely to hear "Quit slapping the trigger!" or "Don't jerk the trigger." While each of those statements constitute prudent advice, there's more nuance to accuracy and putting bullets precisely where you want them on target.

Shooting a handgun accurately is fairly simple, but it's hard. The essential elements to achieving practical accuracy with a handgun are grip, sight picture/sight alignment and trigger management.

Ultimately, we only miss shots for two reasons: One, because we improperly align our sights to the target, or two, because through our grip or trigger management we move the sights and bore away from the intended target during the execution of the shot. Today we examine how to optimize the handgun grip to get more accurate hits.

The Fundamentals Are Complementary

The important thing to understand is that the fundamental elements of grip, sights and trigger are not independent of one another, but are complementary in relation to one another. The better you are in one element, the less impact a mistake in another element will make on your accuracy.

My general rule is this: For defensive shooting, if you perform "well enough" in two out of three elements for the required shot at hand, you'll probably get good hits. If you only perform one or none of the essential elements "well enough," you're probably looking at misses. For example, if your grip is rock solid and your sight picture/alignment is really good, then slapping the trigger is unlikely to matter much in typical defensive shooting scenarios. Similarly, if you have a compromised grip for some reason, then your sight and trigger management need to be ideal to compensate.

Grip Is Paramount

Beginning our list of essential elements with grip is not an accident or random choice. I think that grip is the single most important aspect of shooting a handgun well particularly for practical defensive purposes. Like many people, I spent many years on the range and in classes attributing my misses to slapping or jerking the trigger, because I'd yet to understand the complementary nature of grip and trigger press. It is true that slapping or jerking the trigger can account for a miss, but there is some nuance to that point.

If you watch champion competitive shooters in USPSA or IDPA shoot in extreme slow motion, it becomes obvious that they are generally slapping the trigger like it stole something from their beloved grandmother. So why don't they miss? If you ever meet any of these high-level shooters and shake their hand, you might notice their firm handshake. Elite shooters typically have excellent grip strength, from countless hours of practice shooting with an ironclad grip on the gun. When you lock a handgun down in a vice, the sights and muzzle will not be misaligned during a shot regardless of how hard you slap the trigger. Therefore, the goal is to make a vice out of our firing grip.

For semi-automatic pistols I typically use and recommend the thumbs forward grip. For revolvers I use a thumb-over-thumb or crossed thumbs grip. *Shooting Illustrated* and other sources have a myriad of examples about how to achieve an ideal grip, and in addition to photos I'll include a brief description here. The general principles are that a good grip involves getting as high up on the grip of the gun as possible, having as much "skin-to-gun" contact as possible with no big gaps between our hands and the gun and equal pressure on the grip of the gun from front to rear and left to right. Those broad strokes are simple enough, so let's dive into the details.

Low And Left?

If you consistently shoot low and left (for right-handed shooters, low and right for lefties), that is often attributed to poor trigger press. That is sometimes the culprit, but it can also be a grip issue. This can be demonstrated via a simple exercise. Right now, take your dominant shooting



Continued...Want to Improve Your Accuracy? Get a Grip

hand and make a fist that is closed but relaxed, with your palm facing you. Then, tighten your fist up using approximately half your grip strength. Next, watch your fingers as you tighten your fist as hard as you can. Going from a half-clenched fist to a powerfully clenched fist, which fingers moved the most? Probably our pinky and ring fingers, right? This exposes the reason for a huge percentage of those low and left misses.

When we conduct live-fire range practice, our subconscious brain knows that when the trigger breaks there's going to be a loud explosion in our hands. So if we are gripping the gun at say, 50 to 80 percent of our grip strength, our hands may involuntarily tighten up to 100 percent at the instant the trigger breaks the shot. If most of the movement going from 80 percent grip pressure to 100 percent occurs in the pinky and the ring fingers, these fingers are acting on the bottom end of the lever that is the handgun grip. That causes the muzzle to dip low when we add pressure to our shooting grip.

We don't notice this when we dry fire because our subconscious knows there isn't going to be an explosion in our hands, and thus we produce now flinch response that results in crushing the grip and altering our muzzle. Unfortunately, we often see the results in live-fire practice.

The Ideal Grip

The way to avoid this is to present the gun and aim with a powerful grip already established on the gun. It doesn't have to be literally 100 percent of your grip strength, but you're better off gripping too hard than not hard enough. That way if your subconscious mind tries to tighten your grip as the shot breaks it's got nowhere to go, and therefore no movement to disrupt your sights and muzzle as you break the shot.

When I was a less experienced instructor and people would ask me how hard to grip a handgun, I'd tell them to grip it with increasing pressure until the sights began to tremble, then back off until they stopped. Now, I just tell them to humorously to grip the gun "harder." For all but the most precise shots, a healthy, able-bodied shooter who is gripping the gun hard enough to make the sights tremble isn't going to be making the front sight or red dot tremble so much that it is outside the acceptable target area.

Next time you're at the range, find a target that is approximately 8 inches in diameter (the approximate size of the vital high torso area and at 5 to 7 yards really crush the gun with your two-handed grip and see if your sights stay entirely within that circle. I bet they do. If they don't, then back your grip off just enough to where you can hold your sights within that circle and break the shot. That's how hard you should be gripping the gun.

One of the protests I hear from more slightly built or older shooters is that they just simply don't have that much grip strength. That is a real challenge, but there is a solution: Be efficient with the grip strength you do have.

As mentioned above, the grip functions as a lever and we can exert the most force on a lever at the end of it. That means that our pinky fingers, located at the end of the lever, can exert the most force on the gun. When working to grip the gun hard, focus on getting good pinky pressure.

Dry Practice

It is also important to remember that is how hard you should be gripping the gun during dry practice. It's easy during dry practice to get lazy with our grip, and then that lax grip will likely transfer over to our live practice. My rule for dry practice is that if I've been dry practicing for 5 to 10 minutes and I'm not fatigued, with tired wrists, hands, and forearms, and maybe even a little sweat, I'm probably being lazy with my grip.

While sight picture and sight alignment and trigger press are essential fundamentals of shooting a handgun accurately, the fine details of grip are perhaps the most neglected aspect and coincidentally, the most valuable.

It takes some time and some repetition to get people to become truly good at trigger management. It also takes some time to teach people to see and evaluate their sight picture and sight alignment well, especially when shooting at speed. It is a fairly simple step to grip the gun harder, and more efficiently, and even the newest novice shooter can do that.

Next time you go practice at the range, focus on your grip and crushing the grip of the gun (especially with your pinkies) before, during, and after the shot. You might be surprised at how much it helps.



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Focus on SAGA Insignia



In this Focus on SAGA Insignia we take a look at our beanies, multitools and cloth patches.

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Price: R30



Casually Concealed



by Alex Sansone
26 November 2024

There is a lot of advice swirling around the arena of concealed carry. As is the case with much free advice, much of it is worth exactly what you paid for it. Add in the fact that not everyone lives and works in environments with the same standards and expectations, and finding what works can be quite a challenge.

The good news is, just like with shooting, there are basic principles that can be applied almost universally, which can set the user up for success. The goal of this article and the one to follow is to address some of the fallacies that exist around the concealed carry wardrobe and help establish some best practices for wardrobe development and gear integration. One caveat before we proceed: The perspectives of this article are geared exclusively to men's wear, as women's wear is not my expertise.

Myth #1: Dress Around the Gun.

I've been on a crusade against this concept since the inception of *The Suited Shootist*. I find it unrealistic and unnecessarily limiting to ask a person to completely overhaul their life and make the firearm the focus of everything from thereon out. I've found that it's entirely possible to carry a suitably effective pistol, along with requisite support gear, without having to make major concessions to my preferred manner of dress. Given that how a person dresses can be part of their sense of identity, they may not want to reinvent themselves to be better protected.

Additionally, the idea of dressing around the gun usually contributes to...

Myth #2: Sizing Up.

The idea being, that in order to conceal effectively or comfortably, you're going to have to buy bigger or baggier clothing than you typically wear. Now there can be a kernel of truth to this if the individual in question is wearing incredibly snug clothing with no "Concealment Envelope" (a term coined by Sarah Hauptman of PHLster Holsters). However, most men are generally already wearing clothing with enough room to accommodate a carry pistol.

There are several reasons not to size up: Unless you're going for a very specific aesthetic, and following current fashion trends, oversized baggy clothing looks sloppy, which can have negative effects on your professional, social and romantic prospects. To the naysayers who dismiss fit as unimportant, I'd remind them that military uniform standards stress pride in appearance for a multitude of reasons and many of those principles cross over into the private sector.

By allowing the excess fabric to bunch up on/ around the gun, loose clothing can negatively affect concealment material, causing it to print worse than it would in more appropriately fitting clothing.

All that extra material is more things you've got to fight through during your draw stroke. So if a guy wants to carry concealed without looking like an off-duty cop or a freshman during rush week, what should he be looking for?

Denim:

Dark wash denim in either a slim or straight-leg fit is probably the most versatile pair of pants a guy can own. They can play equally well with a henley or t-shirt as they do with a sports jacket. Especially for a guy who hates shopping and doesn't want too many choices, dark denim has been a staple for stylish men for at least the last ¾ of a century.



Continued...Casually Concealed

Chinos:

Arguably the most misunderstood pair of pants. Folks often confuse these with khakis. Unlike the heavy, pleated cotton slacks our dads wore, chinos are lighter, generally have a bit of stretch, and can be just as comfortable as your favorite sweatpants if you shop correctly.

It bears mentioning that true chinos have the same slash-pocket type cut as dress pants, which allows them to play a little dressier. This can be an important consideration since slash pockets tend to have less usable depth than the 5-pocket cut (open-top) of denim and other workwear.

Chinos are a safe, low-effort way to look just a little bit more stylish than the average dude without being flashy, flamboyant or having it feel inauthentic. It's also an easy way to play with color.

Henleys:

These are basically polo shirts without the collar. They offer a couple of big advantages. The first being that many come in a textured fabric, either waffle or heathered. This subtle texture can help to reduce printing. The second benefit is a combination of functional and aesthetic. Many henleys come with what's called a raglan sleeve (also popular on baseball tees). This sleeve cut helps to visually accentuate your delts and traps, making your shoulders look bigger. This also has the added benefit of drawing the eye higher up on the torso and away from the waistline.

Accessories:

Sunglasses, watches belts and shoes. Those are huge tells and the ones that people seem to be the laziest about. If you're doing athletic activity, then, by all means, wear your Oakleys, Garmin, Blue Alpha belt and Solomons. If, however, you're going on a date, a family cookout, or something similar, maybe ballistic eye pro and a wrist-worn GPS are not all that necessary.

Inexplicably, the idea that "mission drives the gear" somehow gets thrown out the window if the discussion doesn't revolve around gun-fighting.

Sunglasses: They don't have to be expensive. Pick a classic style like Aviators, Wayfarers, or Clubmasters. I have found that I tend to break and lose my expensive shades far less than the cheap ones, but everyone's different on that front.

Watches: You can get an inexpensive Casio, Timex, or Citizen analog watch that is suitable for everything from pool parties to prom. But if all you've got is that G-Shock, then you're better off not wearing a watch than wearing one in a setting where it sticks out.

Belts: Leather. If the belt is visible, leather trumps nylon every day of the week. If you're carrying Appendix Inside the Waistband (AIWB), you don't need a rigid, double-stitched belt.

If you're carrying behind the hip or Outside the Waistband (OWB), the requirements can be a bit different.

Shoes: Leather. Sneakers you can get away with canvas (like Vans, Chuck Taylors, Pumas or Adidas), but in general leather shoes are another way to be more discreet.

So, if I had to encourage you to seek out a casual look to play with that doesn't scream "gun guy" or "dandy", I would suggest this sort of outfit.

Extracted from:
<https://www.shootingillustrated.com/content/casually-concealed/>



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