WEST AUSTRALIAN PISTOL ASSOCIATION INC.

Pistol Shooting Techniques

- TREAT EVERY PISTOL AS LOADED
- CHECK A PISTOL UPON FIRST HANDLING
- ALWAYS POINT THE PISTOL DOWN RANGE

Welcome to the sport of Pistol Shooting.

This booklet covers the fundamentals of pistol shooting and can be adapted to a variety of disciplines. The principles are the same no matter which discipline you choose, as they all involve sighting, trigger control, position and shot processes. Further detailed instructions can be obtained from a suitably qualified coach and also from the Pistol Australia website.

Ideally, Air Pistol is taught first, due to its relative ease to learn and safety factor for new members and economics. No matter which match you decide to start with, the principles in technique are the same. The pistol must be gripped correctly with the only difference being the type of pistol and match.

For instance single handed shooting such as ISSF or two handed shooting as in PA matches (holster). Sighting is consistent in all events with the only difference being some matches aim centre, such as in the PA matches and some in the white area under the black target area such as in the ISSF matches. Trigger application covers all matches and requires the same techniques for most matches. All this is covered here in this booklet and hope you enjoy your journey into Pistol Shooting.

REMEMBER - Safety Starts with You!

a) Always treat any firearm as if it is loaded.
b) Always ensure you point the pistol 'down range' towards the target.
c) Never touch a pistol unless given permission by the Range Officer or Coach.
d) Only load a pistol when authorised by the Range Officer or Coach.
e) Ensure there is a safety flag inserted when the pistol is on the bench not being used (when you sit down or walk away).
f) Ensure the pistol is made safe by the Range Officer or Coach before bagging the pistol.
g) Bring the bag to the bench to bag the pistol – not the pistol to the bag

Grip

1. With the pistol held in the non-shooting hand by the barrel, spread the thumb and index finger to form a 'V'

2. Place the 'V' firmly into the back of the pistol & lay the heel of the hand against the lower portion of the grip

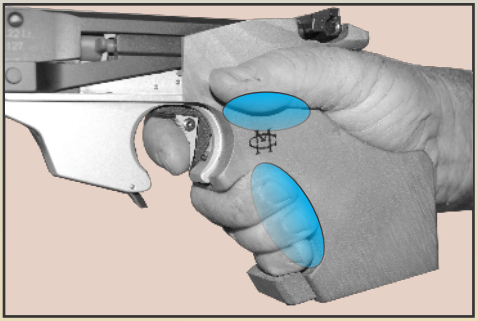
3. Wrap the fingers around the grip being sure to leave the index finger clear of the trigger at this stage

4. Fingers wrapped around the grip, trigger finger is placed on trigger and with the thumb and fingertips, gently resting on the grip

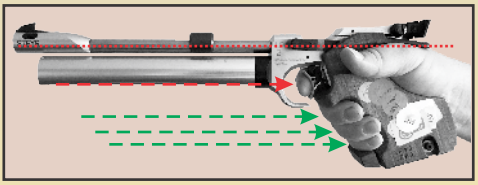
5. Trigger finger parallel to trigger and 90° to the bore line. Other fingers flat against grip, pressing back into the 'V' of the hand

6. Grip pressure directly to the rear. Trigger finger clear of any part of the grip or frame

Grip - cont.



7. Thumb and tips of fingers should not exert pressure on the grip.



8. All pressure to the grip & trigger must be exerted directly to the rear parallel to the bore line (barrel).

Additional Notes:

- *The position and pressure of the grip must be the same for each and every shot.*
- *The pressure exerted by the little finger and the tips of the middle two fingers should be minimal, otherwise the muzzle of the pistol may be forced downward, causing low shots.*

Precision Position

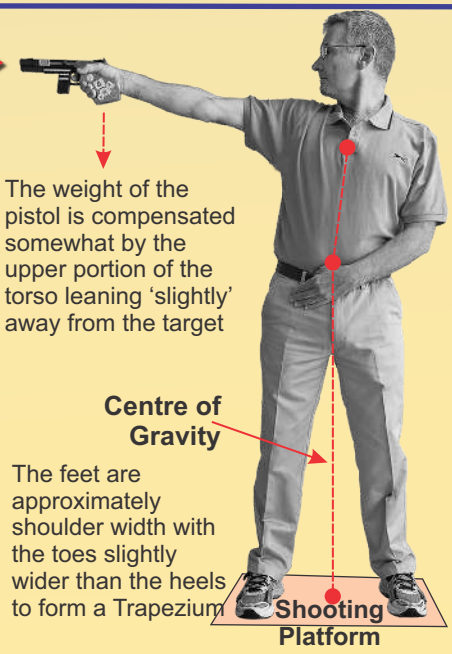
1. The arm must provide minimal amount of movement.

2. The arm must hold the weight of the pistol.

3. The arm must hold the line of sight.

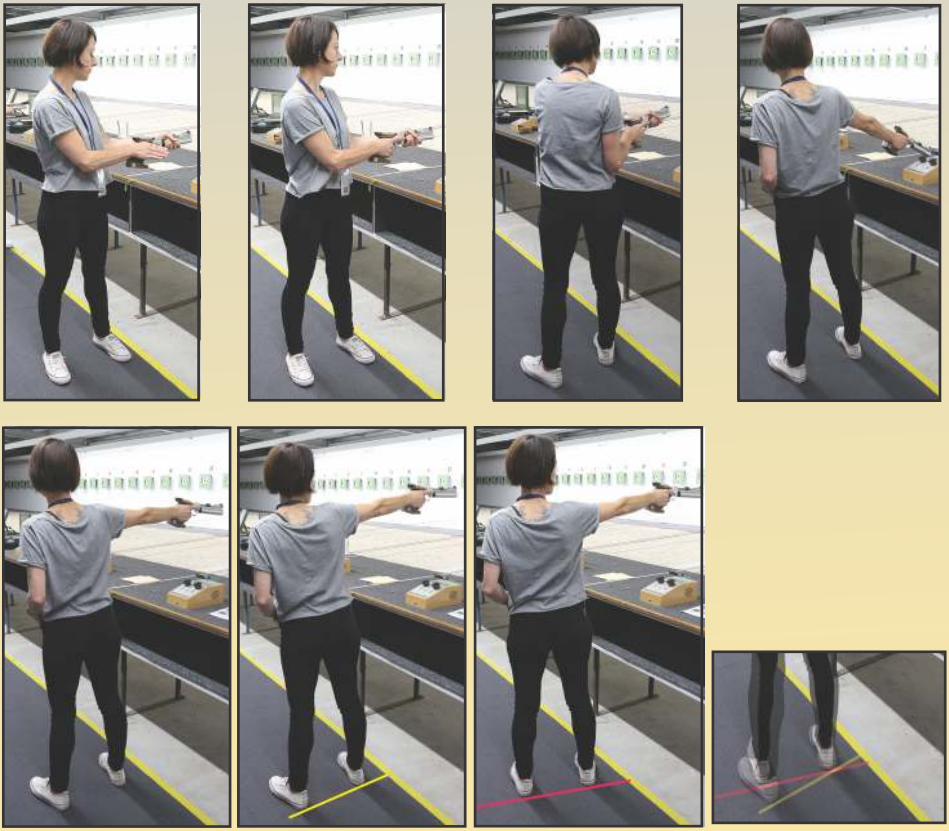
4. The arm must be able to handle the recoil.

To achieve all this, the shoulder, elbow and wrist, must all be locked.



Position - cont.

Attaining Stance & Position



1. Standing in the 'reverse' position, pick up the pistol with the non-shooting hand.
2. Rotate body to correct shooting position keeping pistol pointed down range – toward the target.
3. Look straight ahead to the 'left wall' (right hand shooter).
4. Straighten shooting arm.
5. Looking straight ahead, raise the pistol to approximately eye line to the target.
6. Turn the head towards the target as far as comfortably possible, without strain.
7. Check alignment to centre of target.
8. Adjust 'position' by shuffling the feet slightly to align sights, eye & arm to centre of the target. The yellow line shows the 'position' before alignment.

Red line shows final 'position' after body alignment.

Position - cont.

Extra Notes:

- The stance must be taken up the same, every time you prepare to shoot.
- Everyone must find the position that best suits their specific build and physical characteristics – side facing, or in line stance to the target is the more preferred.
- Your feet should be positioned so that you are standing comfortably. As a general rule, they should be placed at around shoulder width. The weight of your body should be evenly distributed over both feet. The upper part of the body should be upright, with the torso slightly inclined backwards, balancing the weight of the outstretched arm and pistol.
- Position and orientation of the arm holding the pistol, may be changed by moving your feet until it settles in line with the centre of the target. If you use the shoulder joint or wrist for adjustment, the arm will soon return to its natural position and the barrel (sights), will no longer be directed to the centre of the target.

In order to attain the correct position/stance:

- Start by pointing the pistol at the target.
- Lower the pistol, then close your eyes.
- Then lift the pistol to what feels like your aiming area and open your eyes.
- If the pistol is pointing outside the centre of the target, move the feet until the alignment is correct.
- For right-handed, moving your left foot in the opposite direction to that of the error and then shuffle your right foot to regain a comfortable stance.
- Repeat the procedure until the pistol points naturally to the centre of the target when your eyes are closed.
- The smallest of foot movement can make a difference so start with minimal movement.

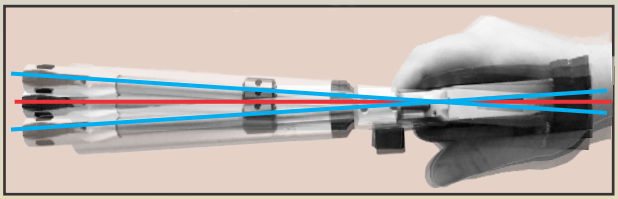
Sighting

General Overview:

- To get the correct image and maintain it, you must continuously and uninterruptedly, focus on the sights only and in particular, the front sight.
- If you have the correct position and grip, your pistol should be correctly aimed at the centre, when you raise it to the target.
- The front and rear sight upper edges must be level with each other and the gaps on either side of the front sight should be the same width.
- The eye is unable to focus on both the target and the sight simultaneously.

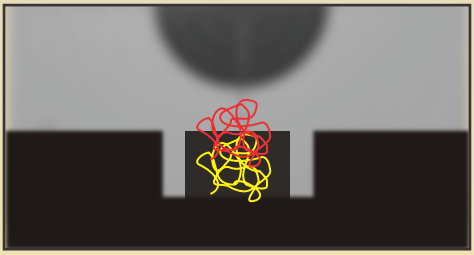
Sighting - cont.

1. Any movement of the pistol is greater at the front sight as shown in the diagram (right). Therefore, focus must be on the Front Sight. Control of this movement will increase with time and training.



2. Point of focus...should be somewhere around the centre of the front sight. The eye is constantly moving as shown on yellow line.

3. Red line represents eye movement when looking at tip of sight. At any point, the eye may look (be distracted) past front sight to look at the target.

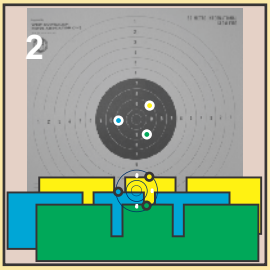


Where to Aim?

One important factor here is the difference between "Area of Aim" and "Area of Hold". Area of aim is the position "you" choose to have the sights when firing a shot. Area of hold is your ability to hold the sights in relative "alignment", during the shot process. A new shooter may have a "large" area of hold, but with time and practice, will see this area decrease.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED SIGHT PICTURE

1. The sub "6 o'clock" as shown, provides a clearer sight picture against the white area of the target. Should you choose to aim closer to the "black" it may cause the sights to become lost in the blurred target. Any movement at the 6 o'clock area of aim, does not show up as much as when being closer to the black.



2. Diagram 1 to the right, shows an area the size of the "9" ring, which indicates that the area of hold is able to "move" within this area and still have shots within the 9 ring.

3. Diagram 2 shows three shots fired within this area of aim and the result is all shots are within the 9 ring area on the target.

Trigger

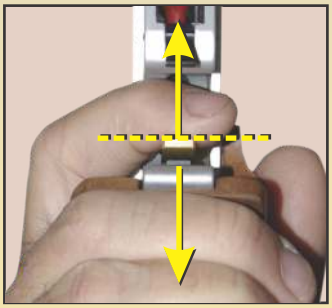
Points to Ponder

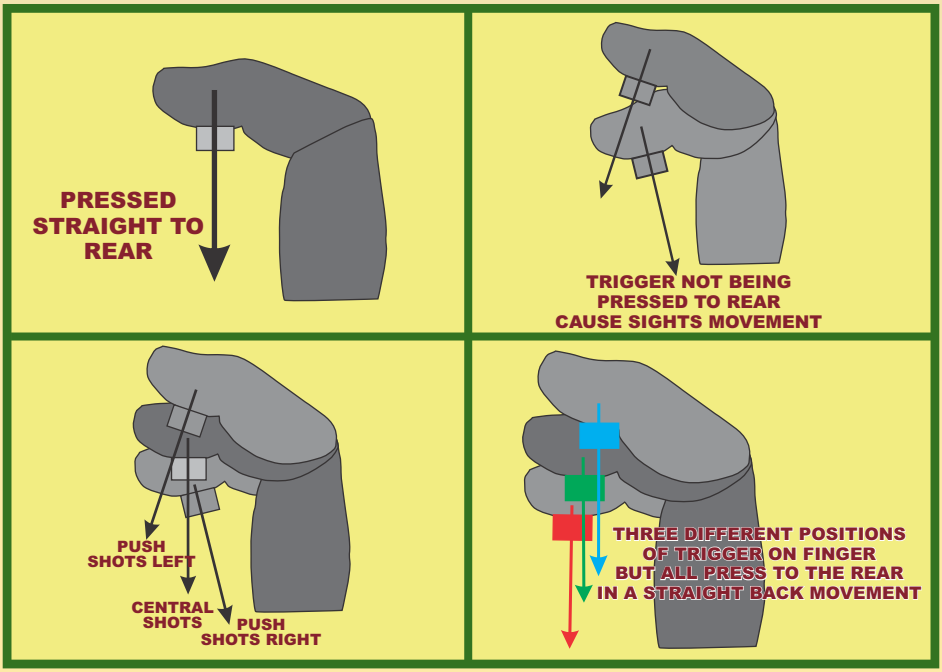
- Except for aiming correctly, the most important aspect in pistol shooting, is to fire the shot in the correct manner.
- Perfection in other aspects of technique, count for nothing, if the trigger release is faulty; because it will spoil the aim at the crucial moment - when the shot is fired.
- The pressure applied to the trigger must be smooth and progressive, up to and beyond the moment the shot is released. The release itself, should be coordinated to fall within the optimum period of holding and sighting.

1. Trigger finger should be at 90° to the bore line at the time of shot release.

2. Trigger finger is parallel to the trigger and must apply pressure to the trigger in directly to the rear.

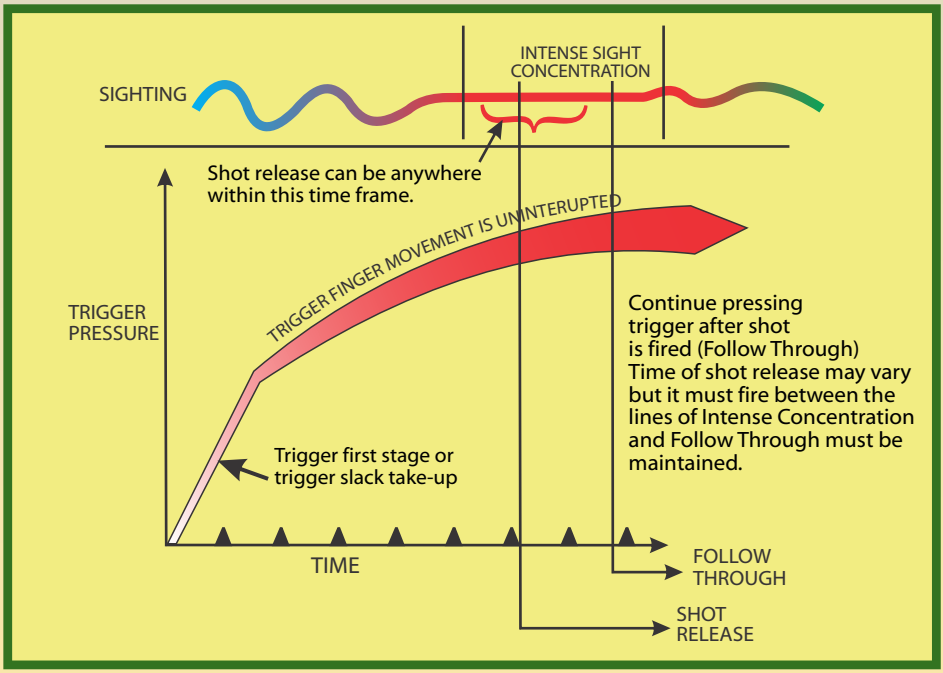
3. Regardless of where the finger is placed on the trigger, it must be pressed straight back to the rear.





Trigger & Follow Through

1. Continue pressing trigger after the shot is fired.
2. Time of shot release may vary but it must fire between the lines of intense concentration and follow through must be maintained.
3. Releasing the shot should not be seen as the last point of action.
4. After firing, it is imperative that you must continue to aim and memorise the sight picture as the shot was released.



The diagram above shows the trigger action combined with the lifting of the pistol ready for shot firing.

It is widely agreed that precision shooters should raise the arm (pistol), slightly above the target and taking up the “1st stage” or trigger slack, prior to lowering the pistol into your area of aim.

As the sights are lowered into your area, the process of focus on the front sight begins with the additional attention to a **“smooth” & “controlled”** trigger press.

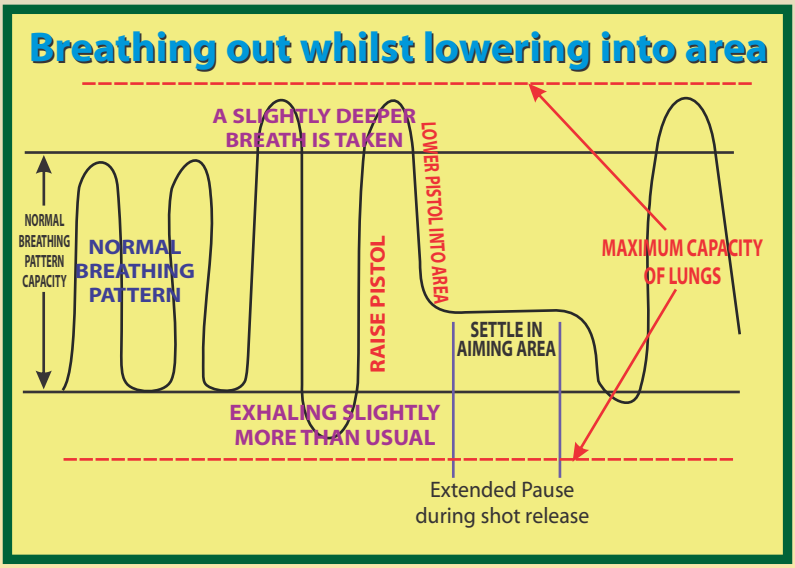
You should not be too concerned about the apparent “wobble” that you may have whilst aiming. Striving for sight focus is paramount, but without a smooth controlled trigger action, will cause the sights to move out of alignment as the shot is fired due to the sudden movement of the trigger finger.

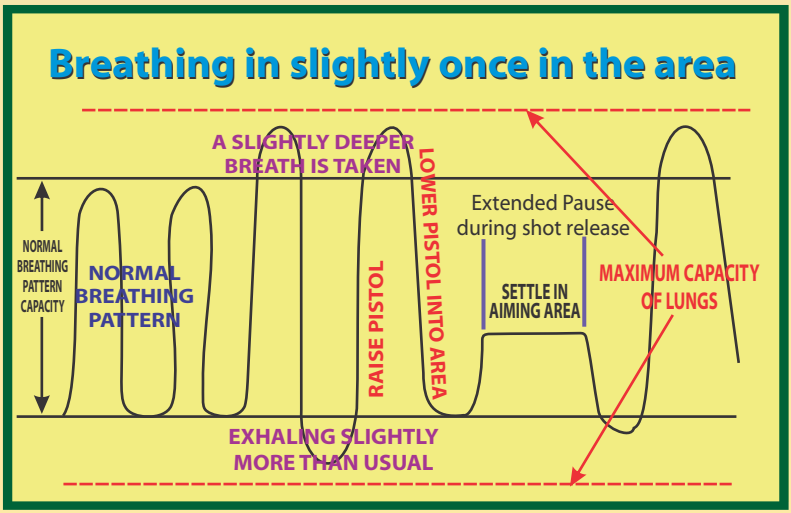
Breathing

1. Whether you choose to breath out and settle into your area, or decide to breath in slightly, once in the area, is entirely up to you. The main criteria is that you have sufficient oxygen in the lungs to deliver the shot.

2. Emphasis should be on holding, or pausing the breath, at a comfortable level whilst maintaining stability.

3. In time, you should develop your own breathing pattern based on these guidelines.





Overview of the Process

Ready to start a shot sequence/process, loaded pistol.....

1. With the arm straightened, with wrist and elbow “locked”, the front of the barrel should rest on the bench.

2. Trigger first stage or “slack” taken up, either on the bench or as it is raised above the target.

3. Raise the pistol slightly above the target taking in a slightly deeper breath of air than normal.

4. Hold the sights and trigger above the target to roughly align the sights, not yet focussing on front sight.

5. Lower pistol through the centre of the target, breathing out until you reach that respiratory “pause” explained in breathing previously.

6. As sights reach your area of aim, focus begins on sight alignment and clarity.

7. During this stage, the trigger finger begins to press the trigger continuously smoothly and directly to the rear, until the shot breaks.

8. The act of sighting and trigger press is continued into follow through, after the shot breaks.

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