



“Dry Practice”

by Steven Gilcreast, Senior Instructor

In nearly every course we are asked a common question: What can I do to improve? The response is the same nearly each time. If you are not conducting dry practice, you should start now.

Dry practice is simply practicing and developing your firearms skills without live ammunition. You can train nearly every part of your firearms manipulations minus the flash and bang of the muzzle and the cycling of the action. Dry practice is—in our opinion—one of the most beneficial methods of training with your firearm.

I put together a simple routine to help develop your basic pistol manipulations. This routine is a 5-session basic dry practice routine to get you started. This routine will cover topics learned in our 101 to 104 handgun courses. I encourage you to add to this routine and develop your own consistent with your level of training; what you create is limited only by your imagination.

When conducting your dry practice I recommend the following equipment:

1. A safe training area
2. Designated clear and safe weapon with 3 empty magazines
3. Inert training rounds (10)
4. Two targets
5. Shot timer (optional)

Your dry practice should be conducted 3-5 times per week and last no more than 20 minutes. I often work through the scheduled session and repeat if any time remains. When conducting the training, I work at 50% or less speed, focusing more on consistent, perfect practice repetitions over speed.

To get started, you will need to make your weapon clear and safe. Remove all live ammunition from the area or room in which you are practicing. Select a safe direction to point your weapon and hang your targets. Set your timer and conduct a visual and physical inspection of your weapon again. Then, perform the scheduled session. Just like any other skill development, consistent training is the key to success.

DRY PRACTICE ROUTINE

Day 1

- 10x – Draw, focusing on each count (access, withdraw, drive)
 - Single trigger press to 4 inch target, cycle for reset, perform scan and access, then work back to the holster
- 10x – Draw and double trigger press to 4 inch target
- 10x – From ready position – double action press to 4 inch target
- 10x – From ready position – single action press to 4 inch target
- 10x – Draw, strong hand only single shot to 4 inch target
- 10x – From ready position – support hand only, single shot to 4 inch target

Day 2

- 10x – Draw, double trigger press to 8 inch target
- 15x – Primary malfunction clearance – two handed
 - Draw, single trigger press : tap, rack, access, one single trigger press
- 15x – Tactical Reloads:
 - Draw, single trigger press, tactical reload (retain magazine), access
- 15x – Emergency Reloads – start with empty magazine, slide locked open
 - Attempt one trigger press, conduct emergency reload, one trigger press

Day 3

- 10x – Pivot 90 degrees in each direction – double trigger press
- 10x – Turn 180 degrees in each direction – double trigger press
- 10x – Sidestep each direction, double trigger press – 8 inch target
- 10x – Each direction – moving forward and reverse – multiple shots on 8 inch target

Day 4

- 10x – Transitions between two targets – single shot on each – 4 inch target
- 10x – Transitions between two targets – double trigger press on each – 8 inch target
- 10x – Transitions between two target – three trigger presses on each, combination between 4 inch and 8 inch targets
- 10x – Transitions between two targets – three to six trigger presses on each target

Day 5

- 10x – Draws focusing on each count of the draw (access, withdraw, drive)
 - Single trigger press to 8 inch target.
- 10x – Timed draws – start with a comfortable time and reduce by tenth of a second as you improve.
 - Single trigger press to 8 inch target
- 10x – Repeat draws focusing on each count of the draw (access, withdraw, drive)
 - Single trigger press to 8 inch target