



16 MOST COMMON SHOOTING MISTAKES

ABSTRACT

Not so many people can brag that they are at least as accurate as their guns. Knowing common mistakes can save you few months or even years of practice. Here I tried to sum up the most common mistakes shooters make.

Alex Vostrykov



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16 Most Common Shooting Mistakes

I don't want to waste your time and repeat any copybook maxims. But even before you start practicing please remember to treat any firearm as if it is loaded and do as you were trained at your firearm safety trainings. Never jeopardize safety!

Grip Mistakes

1. Pulling trigger not with your index finger (index finger of your strong hand is referred to as trigger finger). Some people try to either use a middle finger or to pull trigger with



both index and middle finger (especially when they lack strength to use a correct trigger finger). Cure is simple: either change a gun to a more comfortable one or substitute the spring to make trigger pull easier.

2. Index finger of the weak hand on the trigger guard. This affects your accuracy a little bit. But to be honest, I have seen a great military instructor who shot like a god using such slightly incorrect grip. The only thing, any minor mistake may mean extra hours of training and more dollars spent on ammo.



3. Not straightening your strong hand in two handed grip. People intuitively do that correct when they use one-handed grip. But for the best result you should straighten your strong hand and fixate your elbow even when you hold your handgun with both hands.

4. Weak hand supports the grip from the bottom. This is not dangerous as long as you use good ammo, but this affects the gun control: first, your weak hand on the bottom of the grip cannot prevent sideways motion of the barrel (weak hand is supposed to do that!), and, second, people tend to use such a support to react to (or even anticipate) recoil.



5. Thumb (-s) behind the slide. I remember I promised not to repeat copybook maxims, but this mistake is so dangerous, that I decided to mention it. Nobody has thumbs strong enough to tolerate a backwards motion of the slide even of 9mm weapon. And typically people do that when they try to shoot semiautomatic handguns for the first time after successfully using similar grip with a revolver. If you somebody doing this, don't hesitate and stop him or her!



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Trigger Control Mistakes

6. Pushing the trigger. When your trigger finger is not long enough to reach the trigger properly, pulling the trigger adds some sideways parasitic motion. For a right-handed shooter it will be motion to the left. And, respectively, to the right for a left-handed person. And, of course, this makes bullets to go left (right in case of left-handed shooter) of your aiming point. How to fix? Choose a right size gun.
7. Having too much finger on the trigger begets the opposite problem. In case of right-handed shooter this means that a trigger pull will have a rightward component. So, the bullet will be sent to the right of the point of aim. Same fix.
8. Failure to isolate trigger finger motion. Cure – dry fire exercises. 1) Use a handgun with a red-dot sight. Point it to the safest direction. Dry fire it. Make sure that the dot on the wall doesn't move anywhere. 2) Penny drill. You aim your handgun in the safe direction. Your friend puts a coin on the front sight of your handgun. You should be able to dry fire your handgun and not have the penny fall off.



9. Heeling. It is when a shooter pushes the gun forward with the heel of the palm at each shot. Heeling usually results in bullets getting higher than the point of aim.



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Aiming Mistakes

10. Not using both eyes to aim. I know that it's not very comfortable to aim with both eyes opened. But you should develop this habit to shoot handguns properly. When you close one eye your overall vision drops by 20%! Plus more overhead on the only eye you use. A trick how to learn this. Say, your dominant eye is right one. Stick some adhesive onto a left side of your protective glasses. Now your left eye vision is blurred and this makes you to use your dominant eye correctly while having both eyes opened.
11. Focusing your eyes on the target. That is an absolutely normal (we instinctively focus on the source of danger). But this decreases your shooting accuracy. Focus on the front sight instead!
12. Not knowing your dominant eye. Many people assume that if you are right handed, then your dominant eye is always right one. It's a misconception. There are right handed people with left dominant eye. Same is applicable to left-handedness. So, test and find out your dominant eye. This may feel weird in the beginning, but it will make your shooting better.
13. Improper aiming. The figure below will help you to identify your exact mistake. Of course, provided that your gun is properly zeroed.

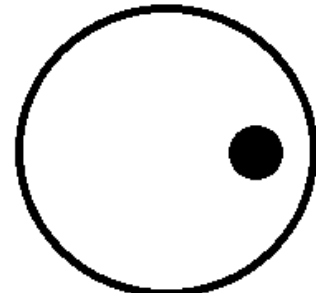
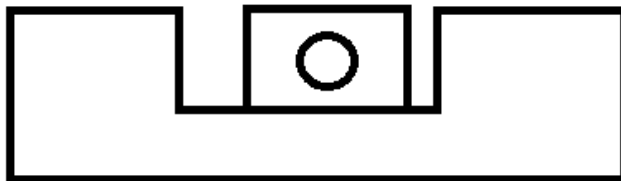
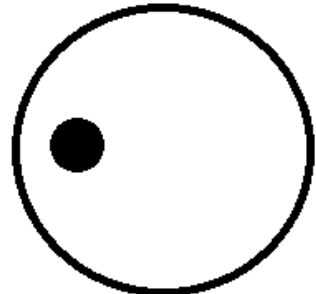
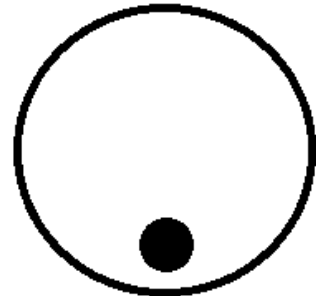
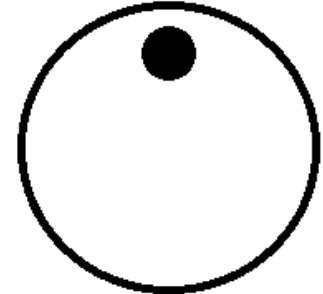
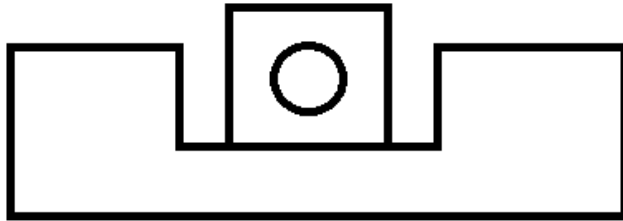


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Psychological Mistakes

14. Rushing too much.
15. Aiming for too long.
16. Recoil anticipation. Pay attention to this aspect if you see that your bullets go lower than your point of aim. Normal recoil of the handgun makes the gun to go slightly upwards. Fight the temptation and don't bring it back explicitly. It will come back by itself. Just don't fight it and let recoil happen.