where I’m torqued way out of my NPA, with a lot of tension in my body, tend to suck.

Then there is the option of setting up our NPA on T3 but drawing to T1. This does have the advantage that, as we engage targets, we can kind of let our body unwind which does tend to move the gun naturally between targets. Unfortunately we have the same sort of problem as setting up on T1 and then moving thru to T3 but in the opposite direction. Our groupability will tend to be poor on T1, okay on T2, and great on T3. Both these approaches, to me, are unacceptable because with both there’s going to be one target in there on which my hits suck.

When engaging three targets I choose to set up my NPA on T2. Thus with only minor adjustment of body position I can still draw on T1 just fine. I can engage T1 and also T3 without having to come terribly far out of my NPA. With my NPA set up on T2, my groupability will be good on T1, great on T2, and good on T3. It won’t SUCK on anything. This gives me the best combination of good-to-great accuracy on all three targets.

In order to transition the gun between targets, the tendency is to pivot at the waist. Unfortunately this leads to a lot of twisting and torqueing and weird tensions in the torso that will cause the gun muzzle to do a hula dance in recoil. The key to minimizing disturbances to our NPA even though we have to transition the gun between targets is to NOT pivot at the waist, instead leave the hips, torso and shoulders aligned and pivot at the knees. All movement should happen in the legs, the upper body stays the same.

This would be a good time to differentiate between NPA and “index.” They are very similar, and closely related, concepts, but not identical. NPA occurs when there is no tension in our body, we are totally relaxed. Indexing the gun is the totality of our technique, grip, arm position, body position, leg and foot positioning, which makes the gun point naturally where we look. The big difference is that index can still occur when there is tension in our body. We can be out of our NPA but still index the gun on-target. For instance, if I adjust my stance by bending and twisting my knees, I can be out of my NPA but, given the right leg position, still index the gun perfectly to a specific point on a target that is not directly in front of me relative to my NPA. We can only have one NPA at a time, however by modifying our leg positioning we can have many different indexes, one after another.

The ability to develop a solid NPA, and understanding how to maintain its advantages even when the necessity to index the gun on different targets during transitions takes us out of our NPA, is one of those things that really separates good shooters from not-so-good shooters.