

# Shooting Tip: Developing Index...Developing Index...Devel

By Duane Thomas, Photo by Ed Leavitt

A problem many people have, as they go about building their skill level with a handgun, is that as they push the speed their accuracy seriously degrades. Many people can be decently accurate when they have all day to do it, but when the mission description is to fire the gun as fast as they can, their groups, even at point-blank range, begin looking like long-range shotgun patterns. In this article I'm going to tell you how to stop that from happening, how to fire with accuracy AND speed. At least I'll give you one of the important pieces. This is so simple you can even do it with your eyes shut. And you SHOULD.

If in rapid fire you can't see your sights, and your shots are all over the target, the two most likely explanations are (1) a failure of trigger control (*i.e.* when you pull the trigger you're putting way too much energy into it and moving the gun around) and (2) a failure of index. "Index" refers to the totality of your body position, including stance and grip, which makes the gun point wherever you look. In this article we are going to discuss how you can develop a great index, and then carry that over into rapid fire.

When many people begin shooting "fast" (which in the overall scheme of things is not very fast at all) a common refrain is that they can't see their sights. This is probably because the sights aren't there to see, by which I mean that your index is not bringing the gun up with the front sight perfectly centered in the rear notch. How can you see a front sight that's invisible because it's to the left, right or below the rear notch? Answer: you can't. Even if you can use your eyesight to align the sights visually for the first shot, when you fire the gun it will simply "bounce" out of the alignment in which you're holding it and go right back into your index. You want your index and "right where I look in front of me" to be the same thing.

Now, how do we develop this ability? We begin, as we do every time we want to develop a new skill, with serious amounts of dry fire. In dry fire, close your eyes, draw the gun to eye level, and then open your eyes. Do you see the sights right there, perfectly aligned, or very, VERY close to it? If not,

adjust your arm position, adjust your grip, whatever it takes until, when you open your eyes at the end of the draw stroke, you do see that. This should keep you occupied in daily dry fire for a while.

On the range, to begin you don't even need a target. Start out with the sights perfectly aligned, close your eyes. Fire a shot. Open your eyes. Are the sights still perfectly aligned? If yes, great. If not, again, change your technique until when you open your eyes you see that the sights have returned to a perfectly aligned state after the shot. This should keep you amused on the range for several sessions.

Then add a target. Five yards is a good distance

to start. Align the sights in the center of the target's highest scoring area. Close your eyes. Fire two shots, slow fire. Open your eyes. Are the two bullet holes close together on the target? If not, if one of them (the first) is centered and another (the second) is somewhere else, again, your index is off. Adjust your technique until, when you open your eyes, you see two bullet holes close to each other in the center of the target.

Then, make the time between shots a bit shorter. Do your two shots still stay together? Pay attention to what it feels like when the gun flips and comes right back down to the same spot. Strive to feel that every time. Once you've got your two slow

fire shots staying together, begin making the shot-to-shot intervals a bit shorter. Keep doing that, incrementally shortening the splits every time you find you can keep your shots together at a particular speed, until you're shooting as fast as you can pull the trigger, with your eyes closed, and still hitting center with every shot.

When you can do that, progress to opening your eyes while shooting. When you don't even really need your eyesight to hit, then you ADD your eyes into the equation, you'll find that, when you start out with the sights perfectly aligned, and the sights automatically return to alignment after every shot, tracking the sights is EASY because they're there to see. At that point, firing the gun with accuracy and speed becomes an easy proposition.

By the way, I got this tip from Greg Hamilton of InSights Training Center. Just wanted to give credit where it's due.



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