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Matt Burkett's 'Practical Shooting'

Video Review by Duane Thomas

Grand Master USPSA/IPSC shooter Matt Burkett's "Practical Shooting" series continues with "Volume 7: How to Practice." A problem many shooters hit in the evolution of their skill level is simply a lack of knowledge of how to practice to improve. We know we're not dumb, we know we're not lazy, and if we knew what to do, we'd do it. In this DVD, Matt Burkett lays out a game plan, a set of drills to follow, to improve a shooter's skill level.

Matt makes an excellent point early on in the DVD, that it doesn't require an immense amount of expensive equipment to practice effectively, you don't have to set up elaborate scenarios. If you watch the Grand Masters, what they do, over and over again, is practice basic skills. Obviously dry fire is exceedingly important (and in fact an upcoming Burkett project is a DVD on dryfire) but this particular series entry deals with live-fire range practice.

As with previous volumes, "How to Practice" has Matt teaching his student Kevin Elpers. But compared to every other volume, this one has much more conversation between the two, much more shooting philosophy and strategy.

This is all to the good since Matt Burkett, as you'd expect from one of the sports' best Grand Masters, has an immense amount of knowledge to share in these areas. We also have Kevin going through all the drills, with Matt demoing as well.

I'm not going to give you the actual drills in this article (I have to leave you some reason to buy the

DVD) but I will share some of Matt's shooting tips from "How to Practice."

Tip: When you go to the range, have a plan for what you're going to practice during that session.

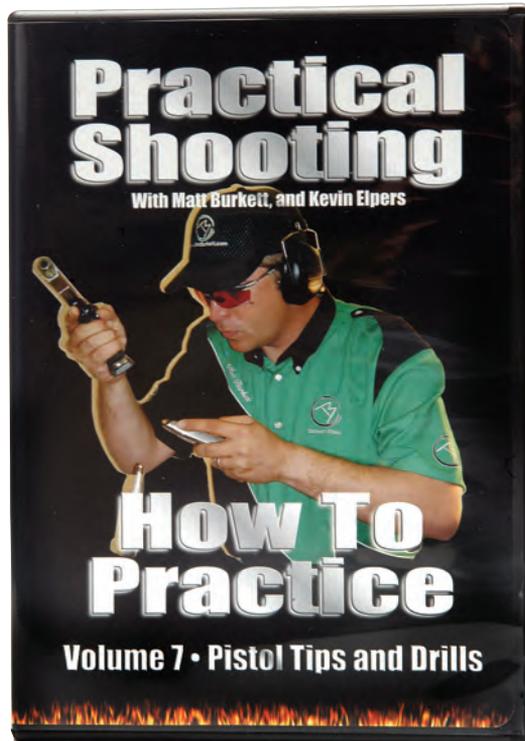
That sounds simple, but most people when they "practice" don't have a plan, they just burn up a lot of ammo. You'll see more improvement, far faster, if you go to the range to practice specific skills instead of just shooting with no clear plan.

Tip: Many people don't realize that in practice you should push your skills to the edge, and beyond it. Then in a match you back off a little. So you're operating well within your skill level, you're getting the hits, and probably seeing things you never saw before because you feel like you've got all the time in the world, even though in the overall scheme of things you're going really fast.

Tip: Keep the gun high when moving, don't drop it down out of what Matt calls the "face box." Because if you do, when you get to the next position you'll just have to bring it back up again before you can shoot. If you'll learn to move with the gun already up in the face box, just mastering that one thing can take a half to a full second off your stage time per shooting position.

Tip: Group shoot at the start of every session, to get you back into the gun before you start practicing.

Tip: If you're training strong hand only or weak hand only, do it at the front of the practice session before you're tired. Alternate practicing strong hand and weak hand so you don't get too fatigued in one arm.



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