By Duane Thomas

Typically caused by extraction failure, the double feed sees an empty shell casing trapped in the chamber with a live round butted up against it and prevented from chambering. This is the most difficult, time-consuming auto pistol stoppage to clear, even with two hands. With one hand it gets really fun. Because the round, partially out of the magazine and with slide pressure on it, pins the magazine in place, before we do anything else to clear this malf we must get the stuck mag out of the gun. In this article, I will teach you a way to make that part of the one-hand-only double feed malfunction clearance drill immensely easier.

Typically, the one-handed clearance technique taught for a double feed is to either (a) begin by locking the slide to the rear to relieve pressure on the magazine, then hook the magazine floorplate on the belt and strip the mag out of the gun; or (b) skip the “lock the slide to the rear” part and go straight to stripping out the mag. In that case, since you haven’t relieved slide pressure on the double feed first, yanking the mag out of the gun is not the easiest or fastest process in the world, especially on something like a Glock where the magazine floorplate doesn’t extend past the frontstrap. Then you rack the slide on your belt (or holster mouth, etc.) a few times to clear the shell casing out of the chamber, holster the empty gun, grab a spare mag, insert it into the gun, draw the gun, tap the magazine floorplate on your hip, leg, etc. to ensure the magazine is fully seated, and rack the slide on the belt to chamber a round. In either version, this is a long, time-consuming sequence of events.

While attending a course at Marty Hayes’ Firearms Academy of Seattle, Marty taught me just the slickest one-hand double feed clearance I’ve ever seen. What you do is take the gun and, while holding down the mag release button, turn the gun at an angle, bring up your leg while simultaneously driving the gun down, and smack the back of your hand hard against the top of your thigh. Invariably the mag will come right out of the gun, and the slide will snap forward over the empty shell casing. This saves you a couple of moves since it’s no longer necessary to lock the slide to the rear, nor do you have to manually extract the magazine. This is FAR simpler and faster. Then it’s into “rack the slide to get the casing out of the chamber, holster the gun, grab a new mag, insert it into the gun, tap the floorplate, rack the slide to chamber a round” and you’re down the road. This really is a better mousetrap.

I should mention that, in my experience, if your gun is loaded with .45 ACP hollowpoints with their huge hollow cavities, you will have to hit the gun on your thigh considerably harder, and maybe even several times, to dislodge the mag because the hollowpoint hangs up on the rear of the chambered casing, than you do if the gun is loaded with ball, as it typically will be at a training class. This is an important point to be aware of, folks! With 9mms, again in my experience, with their comparatively small hollow cavities, this technique is easily accomplished whether you’re running ball or hollowpoints.

Like all scrupulous instructors, Marty Hayes attributes his techniques where appropriate. He learned this one-hand-only double feed clearance technique from Front Sight instructor Kirby Reed. And I learned it from Marty, and now I have shared it with you.