

PISTOL ESSENTIAL DRILLS

El Presidente Drill

One combat pistol drill is the El Presidente drill, developed by Jeff Cooper in the 1970s and published in the January/February 1979 issue of American Handgunner magazine.[6] This is used as a benchmark to gauge a shooter's skills, as it tests the draw and reload, and requires good transitions and follow-through.[7] The El Presidente drill is set up as follows:

Three silhouette targets are placed 1 meter apart in a line 10 meters from the shooter.

The shooter starts with six rounds in a holstered handgun, and a spare magazine or speedloader with another six rounds.

The shooter begins facing directly away from the targets, often with hands clasped in front or over the head.

Upon the starting signal, the shooter turns and draws, fires two shots at each target, reloads, and then fires two more shots at each target.

Scoring varies; the simplest method uses hit/miss scoring, with a time penalty (often 10 seconds) for each miss. El Presidente drills scored under the IPSC Comstock system take the total number of points on the targets (possible 60 points) and divide that by the time taken to complete the drill. This generates a number called "hit factor," which is a numerical representation of how many points the shooter placed on target per second during the drill; e.g., shooting 55 points in 5.5 seconds would give the shooter a 10.0 hit factor. Originally, a time of 10 seconds with a stock handgun, and all the points on target, was considered good. Today, shooters using modern IPSC raceguns with muzzle brakes and red dot sights are close to breaking the three-second barrier, and even shooters using production guns with no muzzle brakes or optical sights routinely break the five-second mark.

The Dozier Drill

This drill was invented by Jeff Cooper after the kidnapping of Brigadier General James L. Dozier by Italian Red Brigade terrorists. The terrorists had entered General Dozier's apartment by posing as plumbers. As many as eight completed the gang and four or perhaps five entered the apartment. One of the terrorists removed a submachine gun from his bag of tools while another terrorist read a political statement to General Dozier. At that time, US military personnel were prohibited by Italian law from carrying firearms within their areas of accommodation, which were within the local community and not on US bases. General Dozier was unarmed and unable to defend himself. In response to this incident, Jeff Cooper designed the "Dozier drill".[8]

The range is set with five metal silhouette targets which are hinged at their base (called "Pepper Poppers") so as to fall backwards when struck. A second participant stands well to one side and is tasked with retrieving a pistol and a magazine from a toolbag, which he must assemble and ready for action. This action mimics the terrorist who retrieved his submachine gun from his toolbag and provides a datum against which the shooter must compare his performance. On the signal, the shooter must draw his pistol and engage the five targets, representing the five terrorists, before the participant representing the terrorist retrieves his weapon and readies it for use

The Mozambique Drill

The Mozambique Drill,[1] also known as the Failure Drill, or Failure to Stop drill, informally, "two to the body, one to the head,"[2][3] is a close-quarters shooting technique that requires the shooter to fire twice into the torso of a target (known as a double tap or hammered pair to the center of mass), and follow up with a more difficult head shot that, if properly placed, will instantaneously stop the target if the previous shots failed to do so.[4][5][6]

History

According to anecdotal history, the technique originated with a Rhodesian mercenary, Mike Rousseau, engaged in the Mozambican War of Independence (1964–1974). Fighting at the airport at Lourenço Marques (modern-day Maputo), Rousseau rounded a corner and encountered an enemy combatant, armed with an AK-47 assault rifle, at 10 paces (~7.5 meters). Rousseau immediately brought up his Browning HP35 pistol and fired two bullets into the target's upper chest, usually enough to incapacitate or kill outright. Seeing that the fighter was still advancing, Rousseau attempted a head shot that hit the guerrilla through the base of his neck, severing the spinal cord. Rousseau related the story to an acquaintance, small arms expert Jeff Cooper, founder of the Gunsite Academy shooting school, who incorporated the "Mozambique Drill" into his modern technique shooting method.[1][5][7][8]

Theory and technique

The Mozambique Drill is intended to ensure that the target is immediately stopped, by first placing two shots into the larger, easier-to-hit mass of the upper body, then, if the target is still active, following with a third, more precisely aimed and difficult head shot. Due to factors such as body armor, the bolstering effect of drugs, or failure to hit vital organs, the body shots may not be immediately effective, necessitating the third shot. To guarantee instant incapacitation by impacting the brain and central nervous system, the head shot must be delivered to the area between eyebrows and upper lip, otherwise, various bony areas of the skull could deflect the bullet.[5][8]

The Bill Drill

designed by Bill Wilson (sometimes erroneously credited to Bill Jordan, Bill Rogers)

Range: 7yd

Target: standard IPSC target

Start position: gun in holster, hands at surrender position

Rounds fired: 6

The Bill Drill is intended to improve speed without sacrificing accuracy. The details listed above are the traditional version, but any 6-shot drill done at speed on a single target can achieve the same basic goal.

Six shots are fired as quickly as the shooter can achieve six hits on the target. The drill teaches sight tracking, proper visual reference, recoil management, and trigger manipulation.

One important aspect of the Bill Drill is learning to follow your sights during recoil so that you can fire your next shot as soon as you have an adequate sight picture. Usually, this means pulling the trigger as soon as the front sight comes back down onto the scoring zone without waiting for precise alignment or for the sight to stop movement in the middle of the target. At full speed, the front sight is constantly moving, never coming to rest until the drill is over.

Baer Solutions Shooting Standard Drill

Probably my all-time favorite drill to practice everything together is the Baer Solutions Shooting Standard Drill from Baer Solutions. This drill requires 13 rounds in the handgun but can be easily modified for 3, 6, or 9 rounds instead of 13. The shooting standard drill is great because it incorporates everything you need to practice for concealed carry. The drill starts with drawing from your holster, then shooting until performing a slide lock reload and ending with reengaging 2-3 shots to finish the drill.

Something like a shot timer can be added to track your times and progression over time which helps track your growth but it isn't required. I will typically do this drill a few times to warm up and finish my range sessions with. Having a drill you can tailor your goals is a great tool to have when it's time to train but you're not sure how.

BAER SOLUTIONS STANDARDS TARGET, AKA "BAER" TARGET

The standards target was created to gauge your performance first thing in your training and at the end. We don't get to warm up in real life so this is shot cold, meaning no warm up. Suggested distance is 5 meters. As with anything, once you have gotten good at it go ahead and move back to 7 or even 10 if you can. If you miss, you fail, so be accountable for your rounds. 9 seconds or faster is passing. Ensure progress in your training. Getting complacent or comfortable keeps us stagnant, always strive to get better.

From the holstered position, hands off of gun at sides, on signal draw and engage left or right 6" x 3.5" rectangle with 5 rounds.

Transition to other rectangle and engage with 5 rounds.

Perform slide lock reload and engage center circle with 3 rds.

Perform drill with 10 rd magazine first, 3 rd magazine second, and have a full mag prepared to get gun back up after drill.

Once drill is completed, ensure you perform another slide lock reload to get your gun up and scan your sector/threat area.

Dot Torture Drill

The Dot Torture Drill is another drill that's completely modular. The Dot Torture Drill does a great job at mixing up your shooting routine with various draws and commands on the various numbers. If the Dot Torture Drill is shot correctly, the shooter will go through 40 rounds but will also draw from the holster a total of 30 times and practice reloads several times as well. If 40 rounds seems excessive, there are a few different numbers that require 5 shots to proceed and those can be easily condensed to 2-3 shots.

Having a number of small circles can really force the shooter to focus on sight picture and incorporate accuracy while being stressed from drawing and shooting in a reasonable time. Not only does it force the shooter to draw and shoot, but there are several strong hand only numbers and practicing with your weak hand only to make it especially challenging. Incorporating new movements into your routine will break up the monotony of a range routine and can improve your skills over time.

The Hi-Point 4-2-2 Drill

A few weeks ago I saw that Hi-Point was including downloadable targets to their website and after I stopped chuckling, I decided to take a look at the target to see what it was about and was pleasantly surprised. The shooter starts off by shooting 4 rounds in the large target and then transitions to the other circles and engages them with two shots each. The drill works on transitions and drawing from the holster while keeping the overall round count low. If 8 rounds is too much, you can always cut it down to 2 shots in the larger circle followed up by one in each of the smaller circles.

It's one of the easier drills on the list and there's no need to rush on this drill so it's great for a quick warm-up drill or for someone just beginning to shoot. At 7 or 10 yards though, the circles seem to be significantly smaller which adds another level of difficulty to the drill. Honestly, if I had to shoot this drill with a Hi-Point C9 or something similar, I'm not sure how my groups would be but it's a great drill!

Cadence Circles Drill

Probably one of the most open ended drills is the Cadence Circle Drill. It is a simple set up with 6 medium-sized circles evenly distributed between the page. The goal is to shoot from 50% speed to 100% and see where your breaking point is when it comes to throttle control. This will give you a baseline for how fast you're able to shoot. This drill can be used for either rifle or pistol depending on what you'd want to train. It's one of the more basic drills on this list but also probably the most versatile targets you can have in a folder when it comes to range time. Adding numbers to the circles is another great way to spice things up and keep the shooters guessing. Have fun with it and be creative.

Malfunction clearing drills

When engaged in combat shooting, sometimes cartridges do not feed into the chamber properly. These malfunctions must be corrected quickly so that firing can be resumed. There are variations of malfunction drills, including the two most often required in competition: clearing a cartridge that fails to fire, and clearing a double feed malfunction.

User error: Magazine improperly seated, ammunition is not loaded upon racking of the slide.

Stovepipe: Spent round does not fully eject and is often seen standing upright in the ejection port appearing like a stovepipe.

Double feed: Spent or unspent round remains in chamber while another round also tries to load into same space.