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# GRIP MODIFICATIONS

## PURPOSE OF MODIFICATIONS:

To have a grip that is maintained consistently through a series of shots. Without consistency, shot placement may become erratic and the ability to call the shot will be limited.

Generally pistols purchased have anatomically designed grips that fit the contours of the hand. But minor alterations may need to be done so that each time the pistol is gripped and raised to the target, the sights are perfectly aligned. It is most important that the pistol sights are aligned when they are pointed to the target as altering the wrist to compensate this alignment will lead to bad shot placement, improper follow through and possibly a loss of confidence in the pistol.

## WHERE TO START?

Using a blank wall for an aiming area, assume your stance as discussed previously. Place the pistol in the shooting hand and have the arm about 45 degrees as if you are preparing for the start of a timed fire series. Look at an area on the wall and close your eyes. Raise the pistol to where you think it may be aligned to this area as if you have a target in front of you.

Open your eyes and look at the sights and see if the sights are aligned. Pay little attention at this stage to the whereabouts the pistol is on the "area" on the blank wall. We are only interested in the sight alignment. At this stage we are more concerned with left and right alignment.

If the sights are aligned, try this exercise again to check the alignment to see if this can be achieved each time the pistol is raised.

If the sights are not aligned (left or right) hold the pistol with the non shooting hand and loosen the grip slightly. Gently rotate the pistol in the hand to the direction which will allow the sights to become aligned. Lower the arm and again close the eyes and raise the pistol and open the eyes. Are they aligned now? Re-test this several times.

Having the sights aligned now, you may notice the grip has become "uncomfortable" and feels like there are hollow sections where the skin does not make contact with the grip. At this stage we need to "fill in the gaps". Take a mental note of the areas that need filling. It may also need the removal of wood such as sharp edges so that the hand attains the same grip each time. Just remove wood slowly with a file or Dremel tool. Take out small amounts and re-test often.

Filling the gaps takes some time but if you don't succeed with the desired result the first time is it very easy to "pop" off the filler and start again.

You need to purchase some filler which dries fast (within 3-5 minutes). I personally use Plasti-Bond but car body filler will also do the job just as good. Care must be taken as the filler will add to the weight of the pistol depending on the amount used. You will also need some cling wrap to cover the filler as it sets.

Firstly having made a mental note of the gaps to be filled, mark them on the grip and judge the thickness you need to fill. Mix the 2 part filler as per the directions and place the required amount on the areas need to fill.

Place the cling wrap over the grip and place the hand into the grip "gently". At this stage the filler is still very soft and care needs to be taken as not to grasp the grip too hard so that the filler squeezes out all over the pistol. Hold the pistol by the barrel with the non gripping hand taking all of the weight. After about 2-3 minutes the filler starts to set and becomes warm. Remove the hand and the cling wrap. With a scalpel remove any sharp edges from the "squeezed" out filler. This has now formed an exact mould of your hand.

Assume stance and try the alignment test as before. This may take several attempts but if it does not work the first time, simply use a small screwdriver and lever the filler off the grip.

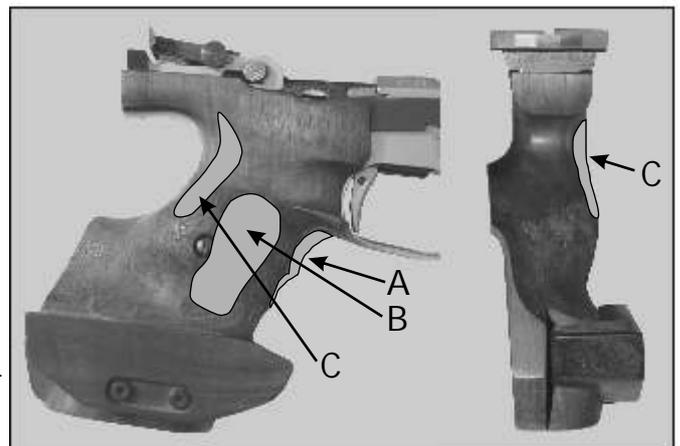
Altering grips can be time consuming and in some instances "disastrous". People have been known to start out with a "not too bad grip" and ended up with a "broom" handle for a pistol grip.

Below are diagrams which may help you achieve the proper sight alignment you require.

*To make the pistol point right, remove from point "C".*

*To make the pistol point left, add into point "B".*

*To raise the front sight, add into point "A" and conversely to lower front sight, remove from point "A".*



Start out by removing small amounts, as the angles change dramatically from these points. A general rule on a Sport Pistol is to move the sights 5mm in any direction, removal or addition of material will need to be approximately one third (1/3)

# A Shooter's Preparation for a Competition Match

ASK yourself "What are you going to do at your next shoot?"

If the answer is "I don't know", don't despair. There are a lot of shooters who have no plan of attack or game plan to which they will adhere during their next shoot.

A shooting plan may not make anyone shoot any better, but it will help with approaching the event with added confidence knowing that all the preparation has been done in training and it is about to be carried out.

Making a plan simply means that: writing down what is required to perform well in whichever event is chosen.

## A SAMPLE SHOOTING PLAN

(Centre Fire precision)

*When I arrive at the range I will familiarize myself with the surroundings and find out in which shooting bay I will shoot. When it is time to set up for shooting, I will prepare my equipment and then sit down quietly to prepare my thoughts for the match.*

*I will use the sighting series as a test to see whether I am really seeing the sights and whether I am applying a smooth trigger release, being sure to only shoot for a group.*

*I will work for an early shot release because I have found that this gives me the best results. This I can achieve with pre-loading the trigger pressure whilst settling into my area of hold. I am able to hold well inside the 9 ring, so if the trigger press is carried out smoothly, all the shots should be within this area.*

*The application which I shall follow for each shot is:*

*I raise the pistol with the trigger finger on the trigger and feel the pad pressure being taken up.*

*With the pistol above the target, I lower it whilst seeing the sights roughly aligned and slowly come down through the centre of the target.*

*As the pistol comes down through the target and the sights come through the centre of the black, I slow down slightly to maintain control over the pistol and begin to really strive for correct sight alignment.*

*During this stage I increase the trigger pressure so that, as the pistol 'pauses' under the black, within my area of hold, I am striving to achieve good sight alignment whilst pressing the trigger. I will achieve a 'surprise' break as the pistol settles in the area if this technique is followed.*

*Having fired the shot, I maintain follow-through on the sights and the trigger pressure.*

Analysis of the shot will be in three steps.

1. *Was I seeing sights?*
2. *Did I have a positive, smooth trigger release?*
3. *Did I follow-through on the sights and maintain trigger pressure after shot release?*

*Any deviation from these 3 aspects will mean that some part of my plan has not been carried out. I will then go back through the plan to re-assess the objectives of firing a good shot.*

A plan should be written for a particular shoot coming up at least two weeks prior and read the plan twice a day for the first week and once a day for the second week. Then, on the morning of the shoot, go through it again. At no stage should the written plan be changed during these two weeks. If it is done, it shows a lack of confidence in the technique used.

Once into the event, you should only be concerned with the three elements of analysis. The plan should not be read during the shoot as this may give self doubt. The shot should be analysed and then, depending on the outcome of the result, work done on the aspect which caused a break-down of the shot.

For instance, a shot is fired. The shot is called left and a '9' nominated. The shot is left, but a '7'. Go through the check list of the three elements. Perhaps the sights were not seen as well as possible, hence the bad shot call.

RE-PLAN the next shot to emphasise 'seeing sights'.

It does not matter how long the plan is, but it needs to be explicit in its instructions on how a shot is to be fired. This is only a guide for a plan and should not be followed word for word. It is important that plans are made for each event and each shoot. No plan should be used more than once, as perception of the importance of different events can change from day to day and month to month.