



SAGA Snippets

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Chairperson's Report / Annual Report for the Year Ending February 2024

2024 was another very busy year with SAGA being involved with various sponsorships and programs focusing on shooting and training, and with a major emphasis on ladies and more specifically, new lady shooters.

SAGA sponsored or co-sponsored at least 10 events throughout the year, and the NHSA co-sponsored a number of events. A new co-sponsor, NARFO, came on board as well.

Loss of Advocate John Welch, SAGA President and former Chairperson

Unfortunately and very sadly on the 9th January 2024 we lost Advocate John Welch, a bastion of SAGA and of the pro-gun lobby group.

John was an integral part of SAGA right from the beginning until he passed away. As a founding member of SAGA he partly influenced and made SAGA what it is today. John was passionate about responsible firearm ownership and believed strongly in the right of the law abiding citizen right to choose to own firearms for lawful reasons.

John was also a mentor of mine and was always available to me to bounce off complicated legal issues pertaining to the FCA and its regulations, the use of firearms for lawful means and in self-defence.

John will be sorely missed by myself, the SAGA Trustees and members, and the firearms industry as a whole.

SAPS Poor Service Delivery

The online link is still available to SAGA members to submit their complaints about poor service from the CFR and long outstanding applications. The volume of complaints did drop over the course of the year with SAPS service delivery being far better than in the past years.

There are of course still some members who are experiencing issues with competency and licence applications being outstanding for many months.

Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime (GI-TOC) meeting

The former Civilian Secretariat for Police, Jenni Irish-Qhobosheane in her capacity as now SA representative of GI-TOC held a meeting in JHB, where SAGA together with other organisations discussed firearm issues and CFR. It was a very positive and conducive meeting and out of this meeting SAGA made some good contacts.

Expired Licences and the Con-Court Case.

On 27th May 2022 the Con Court handed judgment down in favour of Fidelity and thus also in favour of those persons who were / are in possession of firearms whose licences had expired.

As a result of this judgment those persons who are in possession of expired licences have been able to apply for

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Special points of interest:

- *Chairperson's Report*
- *Bruce Shaw*
- *New Trustees*
- *SAGA Corporate Membership*
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- *Body Language and Personal Defense*
- *Competitive Sports versus Tactical Defensive Shooting*
- *Taurus Partners with India's Jindal Defence*
- *How to Dry-Fire Your Gun Safely*



Continued...Chairperson's Report

a new licence for the said firearm without having to physically hand the firearm to SAPS at the same time.

Subsequent to the Con Court judgment, SAPS issued a very reasonable Directive, but there are still a few issues emanating from the Directive that must be clarified.

SAGA is attempting to resolve specifically the issue of an expired firearm being dealer stocked, as well as third parties being able to apply for an expired licence. Hopefully we will receive some positive response from SAPS soon on these two very important issues.

Competency Interpretation Issues

This has come to the fore again with SAPS stations and FLASH Provincial offices interpreting the validity of period of competency with some stations saying to members that the competency expires after 5 years from date of issue despite what the original directive from 2011 issued by SAPS states. SAGA is also busy dealing with this issue with CFR and FLASH.

Media / Current / Topical Newsworthy Events

SAGA has been at the forefront of many matters affecting lawful firearm ownership, including but not limited to, illegal firearms and the source thereof, loss of firearms by SAPS and corruption within SAPS, woman's month / day shoots, and woman and firearms.

We have been interviewed on SABC TV, ENCA, BBC TV, CGNT and other TV channels and multiple radio stations and newspapers / online forums.

SAGA also may have been one of the first pro-firearm groups to have an article featured in the Daily Maverick, which has not always been fair to, or pro firearm ownership.

I wish to thank the SAGA Representatives Aziza Scheidereiter, Gideon Joubert, Themba Khubeka, Hamish Deal, Shaun Lyle, and SAGA Trustees, Stef Grobler and Lance Allam, who are always willing to give of their time for such interviews.

August 2023– Woman's Month

SAGA once more went all out during the month of August for Woman's month and we had a number of official woman's day events throughout the country. Many woman had never before held a firearm and many thanks to our experienced instructors for assistance.

Special thanks to SAGA Staff members Gaye and Peter Goodridge-Marshall who are always willing to give their support and attend the events, or support the events logistically throughout the country.

Other Events

SAGA was involved in a number of other events throughout the country, where new shooters were introduced to firearms, schools were introduced to firearm safety, the general public, and in some cases the media, were shown the safe use of firearms. Quite often we have been blown away by the positive feedback from participants of such events.

Growing the SAGA network and Corporate Membership Base

We have been very successful in growing the SAGA network and Corporate members during the last financial year with more SAGA representatives getting involved with SAGA as well as more corporate members coming on board.

Our call to SAGA members is to get involved and also to introduce your spouse, family, friends and colleagues to SAGA as we need as many firearm owners or those who support firearm owners to join SAGA.

Damian Enslin

Chairperson

South African Gunowners' Association (SAGA)



Bruce Shaw Steps Down as SAGA Trustee



BRUCE SHAW

My involvement in SAGA stemmed from my friendship with the Man Magnum magazine team from the late 1970s. I was of course a lifelong shooting enthusiast. Air-rifle, shotgun, rifle and handgun. I am a dedicated hunter, collector and sportsman.

Ron Anger, John Welch, Ian Lehr and Tony Hofmeyr (all became the first Trustees with Ian Lehr as chairman) and others, had their first meetings in 1984 and 1985 to form an association of like minded pro-gun people which resulted in the formation of the SAGA Trust, being registered on the 2nd March 1985. I joined in the inaugural membership drive of the June or July 1985.

I felt strongly that a competent law-abiding citizen should be able to own a firearm, but I would never advocate that anyone or everybody should.

In the mid 1990s when the Firearms Bill started being discussed in earnest by Parliament, I spent many days from 7:30 till 18:00 in the SAGA office in the Kings building in Durban. I was appointed treasurer for the SAGA Trust in about 1993 or 94 but did not accept a Trusteeship at that stage. I finally accepted in 2001.

SAGA became a voting member of The World Forum of Shooting Activities (WFSA). They are a registered NGO with the United Nations.

I travelled extensively for SAGA to WFSA meetings worldwide from 2002 and spoke at the United Nations twice on behalf of SAGA.

I thank all of those who helped me (and SAGA) during the last nearly 30 years and I leave SAGA with full confidence in the Trustees and wish them every success in the future.

New SAGA Trustees



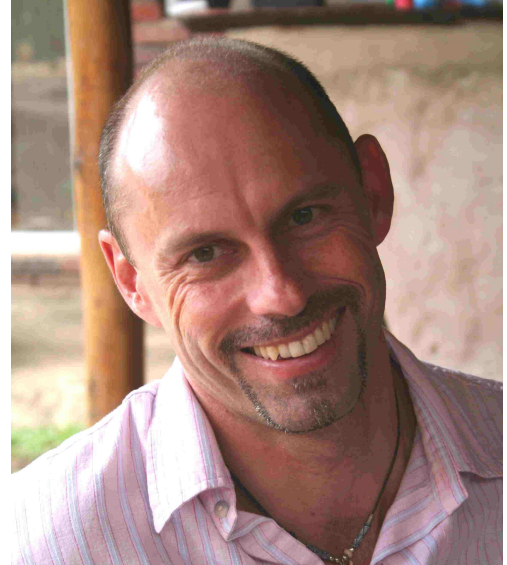
GIDEON JOUBERT

Gideon is a full-time security consultant and firearm instructor. Currently he is the Head of Security Projects at Sakeliga, and is involved in several initiatives pertaining business chamber security and the protection of common economic infrastructure.

Prior to March 2020 he worked as an airline pilot on domestic and regional routes.

He has been an active participant in the firearm policy debate since 2012, and is the owner and editor of the Paratus (paratus.info) blog; an online firearm resource.

Gideon holds a BCom Honours in Economics, enjoys boxing, weight lifting, studying history, hiking, nature photography, and playing with night vision.



SHAUN LYLE

An avid shooter and firearms advocate (not activist), passionate about firearm rights, believing 'subjects' populate countries without gun rights versus 'citizens' in countries with gun rights! Shaun holds active membership of multiple firearm clubs and associations in both KZN and Western Cape. He is a dedicated sports shooter and nationally certified range officer with his chosen firearms discipline being tactical defensive shooting.

A father to 3 young men and a daughter, Shaun is married to Jayne aka GI Jayne who is also a tactical shooter.

On the professional front Shaun is a chartered company administrator, executive finance training facilitator and consulting financial management accountant.

Shaun has been involved in CPF neighbourhood watch initiatives since 2011 and remains actively engaged, he believes 'we are our own first responders'.

Shaun is also passionate about motorcycles, and rides when circumstances permit. He is drawn to extreme sports, and among other endeavours, qualified as a master shark & rescue scuba diver plus held a paragliding pilot's licence (now retired).



SAGA Corporate Membership



**SAGA Corporate Members professionally representing
Firearm owners, Dealers & Associations at the highest level.**

**The members listed below and over the page are all proudly
2024 SAGA Corporate Members.**

ASSOCIATION

CLAY TARGET SHOOT ASSOC
KAAPJAG (CAPE HUNTERS & GAME CONSER-
VATION ASSOC)
KZN HUNTING & CONSERVATION ASSOC
MILNERTON SHOOTING ASSOCIATION
MOSSC SPORT SHOOTING ASSOCIATION
NAACCSA
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RESPONSIBLE
FIREARM OWNERS
NATIONAL HUNTING & SHOOTING ASSOC
PHASA
PWAV/PAAA
SA WINGSHOOTERS ASSOCIATION
SAAACA GAUTENG
SAAACA KZN
SAAACA MPUMALANGA
SOUTH AFRICAN TACTICAL SHOOTING ASSOC
SOUTH CAPE HUNTERS & CONSERVATION ASS
WESTERN SHOOTERS OF SA
ZULULAND HUNTING & CONSERVATION

CLUB

BORDER HUNTING CLUB
BROADWAY SHOOTING CLUB
BUFFALO RIVER SHOOTING CLUB
CAPE SPORTING RIFLE CLUB
CLAY PIGEON ADVENTURES
GEORGE SPORT SHOOTING CLUB
HILLANDALE SHOOTING CLUB
IMPALA SHOOTING CLUB
KOKSTAD SHOOTING CLUB
KWAGGA JAG & AVONTUURKLUB
LION MOUNTAIN RANGERS
MODDERFONTEIN SHOOTING CLUB
MONTANA PISTOL CLUB

RICHARDS BAY SPORT SHOOTING CLUB
ROCKY RIDGE SHOOTING CLUB
SABIE CLAY PIGEON CLUB
SHOOTING STUFF
SOMERSET WEST PISTOL CLUB
VEKTOR SHOOTING CLUB

DEALER

ARMS KING
CHS GUNS & AMMUNITION CC
CITY GUNS CC
FALSE BAY F T A (PTY) LTD
GUNS & BOWS CC
HILLCREST GUN SHOP
KINGS GUN SHOP
MIL.SPEC. EQUIPMENT CC
MULTI-PLATFORM DIMENSION SHOOTING
VGK FIREARMS PTY LTD

TRAINER

ADVANCE TACTICAL
EXECUTIVE DECISIONS
SA TACTICAL INSTITUTE

SECURITY

A.O.G SECURITY
ALPHA SECURITY & PATROLS
PANGOLIN SECURITY PRODUCTS
PREMIER SECURITY
SECURITY RESPONSE GROUP (PTY) LTD
STAR RAPID RESPONSE
STARLIGHT SECURITY SERVICES

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Continued...SAGA Corporate Membership

BUSINESS

BRUCE SHAW TRUST
CLAY BUSTERS
GUN MOTIVATIONS
GUNLICENCE.CO.ZA
LYALL MORGAN & ASSOCIATES
LYLE & ASSOCIATES
MATTHEWS ENSLIN INC
MEDWAY
MOBI-CLAW911
SOTHEBYS INTERNATIONAL REALTY
SOUTHERN RIGHT TREASURY
SYSDEL CC
TARGET TRUCK SALVAGE (PTY) LTD
TAXIDERMY AFRICA
WHYLO (PTY) LTD

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

HARLYN NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH
HILLCREST PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Please support those that support SAGA!

Find out more about becoming a Corporate Member by contacting the office:

TEL 031-562-9951
WHATSAPP 066-003-9226
EMAIL saga@saga.org.za

Sign up as a Corporate Member on our website at www.saga.org.za



SAGA Personal Membership

SAGA annual Membership fees are:

Adult R300
Pensioner/Junior R180
Family:
1x Adult @R300 plus any number of family members @ R100 each

Join via our website at www.saga.org.za

By being a member you keep us in 'business' and we are able to continue working for fair and just firearm rights for responsible firearm owners in South Africa.

Do you know someone who supports the right to own a firearm for lawful purposes? **Get them to join SAGA today.**

The SAGA office is now available on WhatsApp on our cellphone number **066 003 9226**.





Body Language and Personal Defense

Extracted from:

<https://www.shootingillustrated.com/content/body-language-and-personal-defense/>

By Sheriff Jim Wilson

20 April 2024

The greatest defensive tool at our disposal is awareness. Having a heightened awareness of what is going on around us gives us more time to simply avoid a problem or, failing that, to prepare to deal with it. Having a good understanding of body language helps immensely in increasing defensive awareness.

Most crooks can't explain body language, but believe me, they certainly understand it. They will spot a person as a potential victim because that person seems uncomfortable, fails to make eye contact with those nearby, has their head down, shoulders sagging and takes timid steps. They can also easily spot most off-duty police officers and combat veterans, because they move with an air of confidence, head up and on a swivel, continually checking out those around them. Whether we intend it or not, we continually give off body language that speaks to our degree of confidence and awareness.

I once interviewed an armed robber who showed me one convenience store he had no intention of robbing. He said that the evening clerk, a middle-age man, was the kind who would fight an armed robber; the kind who kept a gun handy. He went on to say that this clerk would look you in the eye and greet you when you entered the store. Furthermore, he was continually watching the various customers while they shopped.

My prisoner was exactly right. The evening clerk was a former Soldier who had seen combat in Korea, and he kept a handgun under the counter. A likable man, just one who was not going to put up with such foolishness as armed robberies.

So, when we are out in public, we need to be looking at the crooks, because they are certainly looking at us. You might notice someone staring at you and then quickly looking elsewhere when they see you've spotted them. Instead of looking away, too, it's a good idea to take a moment to really look this person over so you can describe them later, if necessary. At this point, you should be in Condition Orange (potential threat), and it would be a very good idea to keep an eye on them as long as they are in the area. You don't want to act aggressively just yet, but simply give off the appearance of someone who is alert and will probably not be an easy target.

Right in line with body language is what we call a gut feeling or hunch. This is the case when someone suddenly feels uncomfortable with their surroundings and the people nearby. This often occurs because our subconscious has picked up warning signals from something we've just seen or heard, and it generally occurs when we are not as aware as we should be. The gut feeling should not be ignored, but it also doesn't necessarily mean that we need to leave the area. Just get your head up and your eyes open—look for the cause of your discomfort. You must identify it before you can determine what to do about it.

Since the body language we give off is often unconscious, it reinforces the importance of good defensive training. Defensive training builds confidence, and we generally give off that air of confidence whether we consciously intend to or not. We tend to walk about with our heads erect, looking at what is going on around us and seemingly lacking in fear. Trust me, crooks can see this and may well determine that you are more than they want to take a chance on. If they don't, you're still ahead, because you have a much better chance of seeing the problem while you still have several options in how to deal with it.

Competitive Sports versus Tactical Defensive Shooting

By SMS 'Sheriff' Lyle
April 2024

Overview

To the uninitiated, shooting is shooting, with eyebrows often raised. There are so many misconceptions and emotive opinions involved in anything firearm related. That said, the most disciplined people I know are shooters.

Those of us participate in our chosen 'sport' understand that there are many different types of shooting, and even within dedicated sports shooting it's not a one-size-fits-all sport. A common misconception is that under Section 16 (Dedicated Sports Shooting) that 'competitive sports shooting' is merely another name for 'tactical defensive shooting'. Yet while they may appear similar and share some common aspects, they are actually worlds apart, each attracting a different type of person, using different gear, setups and techniques.

Sports does not equal Tactical Shooting

Addressing specifically *Sports versus Tactical* shooting we could argue that if Competitive Sports Shooting (sports shooting) is the martial arts of shooting, then Tactical Defensive Shooting (tactical shooting) could be considered the MMA cage fighting aspect of the discipline.

It's important to recognise that a good sports shooter does not necessarily translate to a good tactical shooter and vice versa. While both embrace the key international rules of shooting, the nuance of each is different.

These universal firearm rules are common to all firearm sports:

1. Treat all firearms as loaded,
2. Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to engage,
3. Don't point at anything you don't intend to destroy, and
4. Know your target and what's behind it.

Practically speaking, Sports Shooting is about speed, accuracy and precision where race guns and high-speed rigs, designed to facilitate high speed low drag engagement, dominate. Whereas the mantra in tactical shooting is rather '**slow is smooth and smooth is fast**'. Tactical shooting is about purposeful movement, situational awareness, cover and concealment with a focus on fast, consistent and accurate shot placement while always anticipating being under threat or fire. In other words, expecting the target to be firing back with a nefarious intent, not just staring back at you as a static innate piece of cardboard.

Sports shooting is strictly regulation driven, focused on one competitive individual at a time, using one firearm at a time and competing against the clock. Tactical shooting is about flexibility, reflecting the unpredictability of the real world and normally team driven with multiple shooters on the range at the same time, carrying 2 firearms (primary and secondary), and potentially shooting beyond the normal 180-degree arc. Safety first is always a shared focus however shooter discipline dominates for the tactical shooter, where 360-degree arcs of fire are possible.

Tactical shooting starts with the element of 'surprise' to simulate a real-life threatening encounter....**contact contact or GUN GUN GUN!** Whereas sports shooting starts with a standard submissive hands up surrender stance and the sound of a timer buzzer....'**shooter are you ready.....BEEP!**' For the sports shooter the stress is time induced competition and trying to outshoot your colleague but quicker.

In tactical shooting '*force on force*' training is the closest we get to the real deal, and this creates a self-correcting paradigm. For example, there are only so many times your elbow or knee will protrude beyond cover before you instinctively realise its unpleasant to be hit by an airsoft projectile at hundreds of feet per second.



Continued...Competitive Sports vs Tactical Defensive Shooting

Next to hunting, sporting shooting is arguably the largest shooting discipline, possibly followed by skeet/clays and precision long distance shooting (area and country specific). Tactical shooting on the other hand is more niche and born out of necessity.

Three fundamental approaches to tactical shooting:

1. Self-defence approach,
2. Law enforcement approach,
3. Military or combat approach.

Weapon Platforms

While the tactical self-defence approach focuses on a single weapon, normally a handgun or maybe a shotgun, law enforcement and military approaches emphasize multiple weapons platforms and the use of different types of movement.

With the law enforcement approach your primary weapon is generally a handgun and secondary is an impact weapon (baton). Under the military approach your primary platform is a semi-auto rifle and secondary is a sidearm (with edged weapon as a third). With the combat approach, dynamic movement replaces self-defence/law enforcement's purposeful movement as protective gear such as body armour, plus teamwork, is more prevalent. Besides restraints (handcuffs and cable ties), other weapons platforms such as edged weapons (knives) and impact weapons (extendable 'asp' batons) are often carried and used as backups. Hand to hand and grappling applies to all three tactical defensive approaches.

First Response

Crucial to tactical shooting, is the realisation that you are your own and your families first or only responder. As is infamously and increasingly quoted: *"When seconds count the police are only hours or days away (Southern African version)"*. At shooting events you will have ready and able paramedics standing by, in real life you don't.

Serious practitioners of the discipline realize this and spend a significant amount of time engaging in medical emergency procedures plus ensure they are well versed in the legalities and consequences of a life-threatening encounter, the so-called 3rd fight referred to by top instructors like Capt. Dean Nieuwoudt of Fundikhono Training.

Tactical shooters following the military or combat approach are largely identifiable by the IFAK (Individual First Aid Kit) carried on their duty or battle belts and often wear body armour or plate carriers dependent on the training taking place, such as that offered by expert instructor (ex-Royal Marine Sniper) Matt Reece of Dark Earth Tactical.

Critical Tactical Concepts

Tactical shooters are well versed in concepts amongst others, such as situational awareness (Cooper colour codes of awareness *Note 1), the OODA loop (observe, orientate, decide & act – used in martial arts and the military *Note 2) hardwired into the human psyche and the Parasympathetic (rest & digest) to Sympathetic (freeze, fight & flight) nervous system switch.

The latter is especially interesting as it explains the psychological process and consequences that result from a life-threatening encounter; including elevated heart rate, loss of fine motor dexterity, tunnel vision and auditory exclusion as adrenalin is dumped into your system. Tactical shooters try and replicate this through strenuous exercise, ice buckets/cold water and the element of surprise immediately prior or during range-based scenarios.

Sports versus Tactical Summary

In conclusion, different people are drawn to different fields, rarely engaging cross discipline. Just as tennis players are not squash players and fly fishers are not bass fishers, and vice versa.

1. Sports shooting showcases skill under control and involves repetitive drills to refine and fine tune techniques for accuracy and speed (IPSA, IDPA).



Continued...Competitive Sports vs Tactical Defensive Shooting

2. Tactical shooting emphasizes disciplined self-defence skills focused on adaptability and decision making under unprecedented high stress situations (life threatening) designed to prepare the participant as best as possible for real world drama.

If you are looking to take your shooting in a different direction, or to the next level, do yourself a favour - ask around and go and at least observe or better still, try out these disciplines. You may be surprised at where you find your niche, whether that be in the discipline of tactical or sports shooting, or precision long-range shooting (long and ultra long range), shotgun clay pigeon/skeet or a number of other specialities.

Footnotes

Note 1: Coopers Combat Colour Codes of Awareness:

WHITE - Unaware and unprepared, YELLOW - Relaxed alert, ORANGE - Specific alert, RED - Condition Red is the fight or flight, BLACK - Catastrophic breakdown of mental and physical performance.

Note 2: OODA Loop:

American pilot John Boyd's OODA Loop is a four-step approach to decision-making that focuses on filtering available information, putting it in context and quickly making the most appropriate decision, while also understanding that changes can be made as more data becomes available. The Martial Arts, Military and Law Enforcement train to use this hard-wired human neural sequence in an attempt to get ahead of their opponents OODA loop with the objective to outsmart and out play them, surviving to fight another day.



Taurus Partners with India's Jindal Defence

by Guy J. Sagi

28 March 2024



A collaborative effort between Taurus Armas S.A. and Jindal Defence Systems Pvt Limited— a prominent company in India—began pilot batch production of firearms this month in India. The joint venture, known as JD Taurus, was undertaken under the guidance of Taurus' expert team from Brazil.

The manufacturing unit will cater to both military and civilian markets, with an initial annual production capacity of up to 250,000 firearms. The facility is capable of scaling to demand and actively participating in major tenders that include the ongoing procurement process by the Ministry of Defense, India, for 425,000 carbines.

Col. Amit Bajeva (Ret.), chief business officer for JD Taurus, told United News of India that, "By prioritizing indigenous manufacturing and aligning with the Make in India Initiative, JD Taurus is committed to contributing significantly to our nation's defence capabilities, while also nurturing local talent and contributing to the socio-economic development of the region." The two-acre facility is located in Hisar, near New Delhi.

India is one of the largest potential markets for firearms on the globe. With a burgeoning population and substantial defense expenditure, it presents unprecedented opportunities for stakeholders in the industry. With a 51:49 equity participation ratio, the partnership between Taurus and Jindal Defence complies with India's "Make in India" program.

JD Taurus is spearheading innovation in the Indian defense sector, creating employment and catalyzing technological advancements. Harnessing the expertise and experience of Taurus's experts, the firm is poised to become a formidable contender in the global market.

Taurus International Manufacturing and its subsidiaries produce revolutionary new products and deliver reliable and affordable firearms to the market. Taurus USA, based in Bainbridge, Ga., is owned by Taurus Armas, S.A., a publicly traded company headquartered in Brazil. Taurus Armas S.A. manufactures a wide variety of consumer and industrial products distributed worldwide. In 2022, Taurus secured a significant tender to supply T4 carbines to the Philippine army.

https://www.americanrifleman.org/content/taurus-partners-with-india-s-jindal-defence-begins-joint-gun-production/?utm_source=newsletter

How to Dry-Fire Your Gun Safely

https://www.nrafamily.org/content/how-to-dry-fire-your-gun-safely/?utm_source=newsletter

By Jim Wilson
27 March 2024

Dry practice – practicing shooting techniques without using live ammunition – is an excellent way to strengthen the basic skills of good marksmanship. You will notice that I am using the term “Dry Practice,” instead of “Dry-Fire Practice,” in order to remind us that there is no firing, no loud noise and no bullet holes in stuff that you don’t want bullet holes in, when dry practice is done correctly and safely.

All dry practice should begin by unloading the firearm. Check your gun several times to make sure that there is no ammunition in it. In fact, you should put all of the ammunition for that gun in another room. During a dry practice session, you simply can’t check your gun often enough to make sure it is unloaded. Practice sessions don’t have to run very long – 10 to 15 minutes is plenty of time to focus on your shooting skills.

While dry practice is most often associated with the personal-defense gun, it is really a good form of practice for any of the shooting disciplines. The rifle hunter can practice his field positions and basic marksmanship skills just like the defensive shooter may practice his pistol presentation. In fact, I even use dry practice to improve my ability to smoothly mount my shotgun for the bird-hunting season.

One thing to keep in mind is that some guns should not have their triggers snapped on an empty chamber because doing so could damage the firing pin. Rimfire guns are particularly susceptible to this because the firing pin must hit the rim of the cartridge in order to detonate it; lacking a cartridge, the pin will strike the steel chamber and damage to the pin could result. Older styles of single-action revolvers, such as the ones cowboy action



shooters use, may also be damaged by snapping the gun on an empty chamber.

This is one reason that I like to have dummy ammunition for all of my guns. I use them during my dry practice sessions. Not only will dummy ammunition help protect your gun, but it can also give you practice in developing ways to reload that gun more quickly and smoothly. Again, reloading is often thought of as a part of defensive shooting, but it is just as critical for the rifle hunter and shotgunner.

Dummy ammunition is made for virtually every common caliber and gauge, including the rimfire .22s and .17s. Check for dummy ammunition at your local gun store, or go online to Brownells for a complete selection. Dummy ammo is not expensive and it will go a long way towards preventing damage to a valuable firearm.

It is a good idea to establish a regular dry practice session. Three to four times a week is probably plenty of time to devote. Work on your basics of sight picture, trigger squeeze and breath control. Work on your hunting field positions. In fact, you can work on just about anything that you think will improve your shooting skills. The key is to do it safely. We keep our guns safe by using dummy ammo. We keep our home and family safe by making sure that the gun we are practicing with is completely empty of live ammunition and that the live ammunition is safely put up, some distance away.

Just remember ... your shooting skills should be almost as strong as your gun safety skills.