



TIGER VALLEY

TACTICAL INSTITUTE FOR GUN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

USMC Immediate Action Medical Video

Developed for the United States Marine Corps, this is an excellent overview on the basics of dealing with an "Immediate Action Medical" scenario. If you are interested in being capable of dealing with such situations, make sure to attend the last of this year's Immediate Action Medical class on October 1st.

Watch the video [here](#).



Elm Fork Wednesday Night Classes

Our last Immediate Action Medical class of the year is being held at [Elm Fork](#) on October 1st. Pre-registration is required. You can either drop a check in the mail to our office address or pay through our [online store](#). The fee is \$85, which includes a medical "blow-out kit" and the course runs from 6:30 PM to 9 PM.

Our "Undercover Carry" class will be held on October 15.

Students will work on drawing their daily carry weapons from concealment and using them at "in the hole" distances. Arrive with your handgun(s), holster(s), 200 rounds of ammo, safety gear, and \$65 course fee. The course runs from 6:30 PM to 9 PM and pre-registration is not required.



October 29th is "Advanced CQB Carbine". Shooting and moving, 90 degree target engagements, reloads, transition drills, and weapon strikes will be covered. Carbine with sling, pistol with holster, 200 rounds carbine, 50 rounds pistol, and safety gear is required. These cost is \$65, runs from 6:30 PM to 9 PM and pre-registration is not required.

Team Sniper Match Complete

Forty teams competed in Tiger Valley's Team Sniper Match on September 20th and 21st. We ran participants through four long stages on Saturday and another four on Sunday.

Many stages ran from five to ten minutes each and we included an "identify and kill" scenario that ran for over an hour.

Big congratulations to the Sommers and Long team for winning the event. Many thanks to our great crew of Range Officers who all did an excellent job. We will create a video for the match that should appear in the next newsletter, so stay tuned!

There's an active discussion of the match along with additional pictures on Sniper's Hide, which you can find [here](#).

We had an excellent group of sponsors who contributed to the prize table for this match. Please keep these companies in mind, as they have gone out of their way to contribute to the shooting sports.

Match sponsors were:

[Black Hills Ammunition](#)

[Cheaper than Dirt](#)

[Chosen Tactical](#)

[Jet Suppressors](#)

[LaRue Tactical](#)

[Liberty Suppressors](#)

Louque's Precision Firearms

[Martin Knives](#)

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[Predator Custom Shop](#)

[Spec-Ops Brand](#)

[Strider Knives](#)

[Surefire](#)

[SWFA - RifleScopes.com](#)

Terry Cross - KMW

[Triad Tactical](#)

[US Optics](#)



New Class - Advanced Precision Rifle

At the our Team Sniper Match, many skilled shooters complained that they never get the opportunity to shoot very long ranges and engage dynamic targets and movers at extended distances.

Endeavoring to fill this void we have the following training session planned on November 15 and 16. Shooting will begin on the 1000 yard KD range. Each and every shot, stationary, mover, bobber and stop & go will be disked for the shooter to evaluate. You will engage targets and have your dope to 1000 yards. Shooters can expect to fire 10 rounds from each yard line and at least 60 rounds from the UKD range.

There will be no classroom time and students must be familiar with their equipment and the fundamentals of long range shooting. New precision rifle shooters are encouraged to attend our [Level I Precision Rifle](#) class instead.

Course details:

- Shooters on the line at 100 yards for cold bore shooting and group evaluation
- 200-yard face shots into the pits
- 200-yard movers
- 300-yard stationary targets
- 300-yard moving targets
- 400-yard stationary targets
- 400-yard moving targets
- 500-yard moving targets
- 500-yard moving targets
- 600-yard stationary
- 600-yard moving targets
- 700-yard stationary targets
- 700-yard stop and go targets
- 800-yard stationary targets
- 800-yard bobbbers
- 900-yard stationary
- 1000-yard stationary

After completion of the KD portions of the class shooters will move the UKD range and engage targets to 1000 yards. Shooters can expect to engage life-like targets to include: Larue targets, T-62, scout vehicles, building with targets and movers, steel reactionary props to name a few. This will be a fast paced class.

Participation for both days is \$300, for one day is \$175.
Space is limited and pre-registration is required.



Let's Get a Grip

by Wayne Dobbs

This month, as my 87-year old Southern mother has always said, we're going to get down to brass tacks! I don't know how many times I've heard her say that, but I know that when she does, you'd better listen, because something critical is about to be discussed. The fundamental in question this month is one that is just that "critical" (in my hierarchy of importance) when we consider the use of the pistol for combative use. We're going to discuss how to grip the gun this month and I think you'll find it's a lot more important and involved than you may already know.



You may recall that in one of the first installments in this series of articles, I mentioned that I had watched lots of really bad shooting performances at various ranges and matches by lots of really bad shooters. I said that they were either ignorant of proper fundamentals or too lazy to apply them. That statement still holds and since then, I've added lots more of those observations to my collection. One failing that I see most often in these "shooters" is that they don't ever establish and maintain a proper grip on their pistols. This then kicks the door wide open for their ensuing horrible shooting performances because you see, the fundamental of grip is one of the two foundation fundamentals required to achieve an excellent shooting performance in a fight. (We'll discuss the other critical one next time, but I'm sure you can figure it out if you've read all of the preceding articles.) I'm also convinced, based on long experience, that improper and inadequate grip establishment is one of the driving factors in most of the horrible shooting performances you see in street shootings by police and armed citizens where you see 80% or more of the shots fired by our heroes completely miss targets that are literally at "bad breath" ranges!

So, given the foregoing assertions on my part, what is a proper and adequate grip supposed to do for us?

The first thing to realize is that the grip is one of the two interfaces between man and tool and therefore, that interaction must be satisfactory enough to achieve a high level of subconscious efficiency with that tool. If and when we get into a fight that demands a pistol for solution, life is going to be tough enough without having to devote our conscious efforts to use that tool. We want to be able to employ the tool, our pistol, without having to think about how we are holding it. Lots of money is paid to lots of



designers and engineers to make sure the tools “fit” us and that field is known as ergonomics. Most of our choices in service guns these days are fairly well done, ergonomics wise. Some are excellent and some less so, but most of the major brands are usable, given average hand dimensions and sufficient training with that chosen tool.

The first marksmanship task the grip accomplishes is to position or orient the pistol on the target we wish to strike with our rounds. It must do this without our conscious effort and I keep harping on that, because if you have to spend time to fight the gun onto the target and occupy your thoughts with that demand, you have just become a prime candidate for a subterranean condo at the local bone orchard! When properly gripped and extended to the target, the pistol’s sights should align very closely to the point you wish to strike on a close range target with your eyes closed. This kind of reliable target index is priceless when under stress and it is easily achieved, given proper pistol selection and proper grip establishment. How do we verify this with our particular grip and pistol? By firing three to five shot groups on a close target (10-15’ away) with our eyes closed! You will be amazed how well you can do this and how much you’ll learn if you execute fundamentals correctly during this kind of exercise.

Next, we want the pistol stabilized against incidental movement so that our index on target feels (and is) rock solid. Our expectation from this well-established grip is that minor trigger control errors at close range on average human thorax-sized targets are of no consequence in our quest for rapid and centered hits on that target. In other words, the properly established grip will overcome some of your trigger control errors! Adding to this list of demands is the ability to manage and direct the gun’s recoil and muzzle flip in a consistent and repeatable fashion so that the weapon’s sights realign on target in the same location shot after shot without conscious influence from the shooter. In short, a properly applied grip is exactly like the steering and brakes on your automobile. The grip is perhaps the single most important control you exert over your weapon and just like your vehicle, if you lose steering and brakes, you’re in deep trouble.

So, we require the grip to orient the gun, stabilize the gun and drive the gun back on target after each shot, without us having to use conscious inputs on the pistol. That seems like a tall order, but it’s not if you do the job correctly. While



we're accomplishing great things with that grip, there are several things that we must avoid: inconsistency in the "building" of the grip, a skewed or torqued grip, having to regrip the gun during a firing string, inadvertent activation or depression of the slide stop, slide-function related malfunctions and the sympathetic increase of grip pressure as the trigger is pressed. The order just got taller, but we're going to fill it!

Before I start describing how a solid grip is built, I must confess something. When I was introduced to this grip style back in 1991-1992 by T. J. Pilling, then a firearms trainer for Garland PD, and later by Mid-South Institute of Self-Defense Shooting, I thought it was goofy looking and odd feeling! If you've been gripping a pistol like most folks do that have had little or no training you will initially feel that the grip ain't right! That's OK to be skeptical, but if you will do what I suggest and hang in for several serious shooting sessions, you will be amazed how much better your pistol shooting gets. To use an old saying about life: "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got". For many of you, that means you've always been from mediocre to downright sorry with a pistol or you're OK for the first few shots and then you go downhill. This lesson can change your pistol shooting skills for the better immediately.

The first thing we must do is grip the pistol properly in the strong hand. We must have the weapon centered in the "V" formed by our thumb and index finger and that centering should also align the point of the elbow, the general axis of the forearm bones and the front sight in a straight line. Our grip on the gun should be high up on the rear tang of the frame and no space should be apparent between that tang and our hand's web. Our strong hand thumb is flagged up and is exerting no sideways grip force on the gun. If we have a single action automatic such as a 1911, 1935 or other design with a Browning style thumb safety, our strong thumb rides the lever of that safety. (See photo #1 for further on what this looks like.) Our strong hand fingers are firmly wrapped around the frontstrap of the pistol and the medial knuckles of those fingers form a near straight vertical line down the front of the gun, usually on the near side of the frontstrap of the pistol. Our middle finger is butted up firmly against the bottom of the trigger guard and the other fingers lay alongside with no gaps between them. The trigger finger is straight or slightly bowed and is in a "register" position on the pistol's frame above the trigger guard periphery. (See



photo 2 for details of this) Our grip force on the pistol will vary from shooter to shooter, but it should be held like you'd hold a tool that you were going to give some serious use. You shouldn't be quivering or trembling and you shouldn't be holding it like it's delicate. Finally, our grip force vector on the pistol with our strong hand is fore and aft, avoiding sideways torque or skew of the weapon. If you've done all of this properly, you now have a solid one-handed shooting grip. Lots of great pistol shooting work has been (and will be) done one-handed, and if your off hand is occupied, you are good to go just like this. If the other hand is available, then we can really make the job easier and better by adding the support of the other hand.

I told you earlier that I've seen lots of really bad grips and bad shooting and the addition of the second hand is usually where we run into the ditch, technique wise. Commonly seen are "cup and saucer style" (see photo), "wrist grabs" (see photo) and "wrapped thumb style" (see photo). Hopefully, by now I've gored your particular grip style's "ox" and we can move on to fixing things. If we're going to use two hands on the gun, we should do something that makes it easier to run the gun at speed under deadly stress. If all you want to do is shoot cans at Granny's pond, it doesn't matter what you do since you have nothing critical riding on your skill for that pursuit. If you think or know you want to use the pistol to defend yourself or your loved ones, you owe it to all to do it right. I've alluded before that there are way too many tasks to handle in a fight and having to think about how you're running a weapon is not something you should have to think about...it should be done at a subconscious level so you can think about more important things. All of the grip styles mentioned above fail to consistently orient, stabilize and realign the pistol under stress shooting scenarios and they all allow way too much muzzle flip in rapid shot sequences.

The addition of the properly applied support hand to the grip gives us much better lateral stabilization, much better target index speed, better overall grip "neutrality" and drastically reduced muzzle flip. All of these advantages combined with decent trigger control, can and will take a shooter in a fight from missing most of his shots to somebody that makes solid hits with most of, if not all of his shots. Following are descriptions and photos of how we do that.

The first thing we need to do is to get you out of the mindset



of using your support hand the way you've always done it. We're going to make it work for us as efficiently as possible and we're going to turn it into a brake for us. To begin, I want you to point your support hand finger at some imaginary target and lock your wrist as best you can. Now take your strong hand and try to move that hand pointing the finger. You should notice that your wrist is not locked and can't be. Therefore using that hand with your fingers pointed forward as the second half of your grip will never give you the muzzle flip control and stability you need. Now, it's time for something different. Take that same support hand and use the thumb as the pointer at the target. (see photo #3) Your fingers should be pointed down at about a 30 to 40-degree angle if you're doing this correctly. Now check your wrist lock-up. As Gomer Pyle would have said, "Shazam!" You've now learned a biomechanical trick of how to set your wrist into a locked position. This forward camming action of the wrist and thumb is about to change your shooting capability. Keep the thumb of the support hand pointed forward, the fingers angled down, and place the corner of the thumb joint and the heel of your support hand into the opening created at the end of your master hand fingertips and the flagged thumb of your master hand. (see photo #4) This opening is now completely filled and the thumbs should point forward while alongside the weapon's frame with the support thumb under the strong thumb. The angled support hand fingers now wrap around the strong hand's fingers with the support hand index finger butting up firmly on the bottom of the trigger guard. The thumbs are exerting little or no pressure on the gun and the support hand fingers are gripping the gun in a side-to-side manner. By building the grip this way, we've sealed an energy leak area between our strong hand fingertips and thumb (on the gun's support side), we've placed a locked wrist on the grip to minimize muzzle flip and we've created a 360 degree grip around the gun with no place for the gun to run away from us. We also have added another pointer finger (the support thumb) to assist us in rapidly and precisely placing the gun on target.

Now some additional things to consider about this. The gun should be held neutrally, without any lateral forces at play. Imagine that it's hanging from the ceiling on a string and you're simply building this grip around the gun. When you position this grip and gun unit at the centerline of your body, against some point along a line from your solar plexus to mid-chest area, you are now prepared to drive it precisely to the point on the target you wish to hit. Assume your action

stance (see the article on that) and start smoothly moving the gun from your ready position to the target. Verify that the sights are generally aligning on the target. Once you build a groove, it's simple to drive a sights aligned gun onto close and medium ranged targets. Sight alignment starts to occur without much effort from you and combined with good trigger management, good hits become much easier.

Now, a couple of quick hints and cautions. Changing old ways of doing something takes time and commitment. You will most likely do this for a few shots and then slide back to your old grip because it's a habit. As you slide back, so will your capabilities. A quick way to check yourself is to open your support hand fingers. If they're pointed straight ahead, you've backslid! They should be angled down at that previously described 30 to 40-degree angle. Next, look over the top of your pistol at the tip of your support thumb and the tip of your in register trigger finger. The tips of both should align closely. If they don't, you've slid. Next, check to see if both thumbs are pointed forward (strong on top of support) and if the heel of the support hand is high on the gun and filling that energy leak gap. If all these criteria haven't been met, you're back to your old ways. This grip is not a gimmick and it's not a gaming trick for matches. It's a serious technique and it's used by some very serious folks besides the competitors (of which all the successful ones use it too). That list is long and includes the entire Special Operations community, well-trained LE units and their training personnel. It works and of that there is no question. TJ's department adopted this set of techniques and in well over two-dozen shootings achieved hit rates in the 90-percentile range. That's an astounding level of performance and we're not just considering the SWAT guys or gun enthusiasts in those figures.

Look at the text, review the pictures and give it a serious try of at least a 1000 rounds of serious training. I would suggest you come and take a pistol class with us and see if we can't back up our assertions on this. I bet you'll change...

As always, feel free to send me any comments or questions on these topics. I would love to hear from you! My email addresses are: detwd114@yahoo.com or wayne.dobbs@yahoo.com.

(Editor's note. Click on these article titles if you missed Wayne's previous three handgun articles, "[Fundamentals - Not Those Again!](#)", "[What's Your Stance](#)", and "[Oh, Say Can](#)

[You See... The Sights".\)](#)

Previous Newsletters Available Online!

Check out our previous newsletters for fantastic training videos, equipment reviews, and special articles. Find them [here](#).

Upcoming Events

October

- 1 [Immediate Action Medical \(Elm Fork\)](#)
- 11 [Bug Out Drill](#)
- 15 Undercover Carry (Elm Fork)
- 18-19 [Level 2 Carbine \(Waco\)](#)
- 24-26 FCSA Regional Match (Waco)
- 29 Advanced CQB Carbine (Elm Fork)

November

- 3-7 Advanced SWAT (Waco)
- 8-9 Team Combat & Medical (Waco)
- 12 Low Light Pistol (Elm Fork)
- 15-16 Advanced Sniper (Waco)
- 21-23 [Level 1 Precision Rifle \(Waco\)](#)
- 22 [Undercover Carry \(Elm Fork\)](#)



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