John's Guide To Shooting Gooder

Courtesy of Two Pillars Training

Hierarchy of Training

SAFETY – Includes: awareness of muzzle direction, trigger finger control, reflexive manipulation of weapon safeties, ability to rapidly assess a person as threat/non-threat, awareness of background

MANIPULATION – Includes the ability to: load, unload, and perform reloads, malfunction clearances, ability to perform the preceding with one hand.

MARKSMANSHIP – The ability to place rounds on an anatomically significant target in a realistic time frame with two hands or one hand.

APPLICATION – The ability to use the skills listed above to solve problems of increasing complexity.

Key Points

- If someone is trying to kill you, you want to be able to shoot and run the gun like you drive – without conscious thought.
- Fundamentals of shooting always matter. No matter how tactical you are and what advantages you manage to accumulate, if you can't hit, it doesn't matter.
- The fundamental that is most difficult to develop and maintain is trigger control. It is also more subject to the effects of stress and degrades the quickest. You want more than you think you'll need.
- There is only a small percent of the human body you can shoot that will cause someone to stop whatever they're doing quickly. The most optimistic targets sizes are an 8" circle high in the chest (~50 square inches) and 3"x5" in the ocular window.
- To improve, you need to do a certain volume of work. None of us have the resources to do all of that work through live fire. Some improvements can only be learned/earned in dry practice.
- If you aren't dry practicing regularly, you will never get better. And you can do it on work time.
- Every agency's shooting standards are set so that practically everyone can pass without doing any practice between qualifications. Much better shooting is possible with just a little work.
- Some live fire (50-100 rounds a month) is all you need to keep getting better – you're just are validating your dry practice. 9mm sell for less than $200 a case. That's a year's worth of ammunition.
- There is a lot of "free stuff" you can do to improve your shooting. Get stronger (especially your grip) and develop your eyes.
- You need a shot timer – a phone app will go a long way.
- Make sure your gun fits your hand – no excuse in 2025.
- Make sure you're dry practice is done in a way that nobody can be hurt if something goes wrong.

Things To Do ***Before*** People Are Trying to Kill You

Essential Mental Programs to Develop

1. **Threat ID** – Paul Howe's Algorithm: Whole body, hand, hand, waist, face.

2. **Ideal Shot Placement** – for full frontal: along vertical center line, horizontal line at arm pit level. For non-frontal, visualize the spine and shoot for it at armpit level.

3. **Post Shooting Actions** – order varies: get to cover, top off gun, communicate, scan, self-check, render aid (when possible)

(Work one at a time, practice daily for a month or so, then refresh occasionally)

Work To Do

1. **Develop Grip Strength** – at least 100 lbs. in males; around 80 lbs. for females (the "thumbs forward" grip is very dependent on grip strength to work; will help control the gun in recoil and allow controlled, rapid fire)

2. **Learn To Isolate The Trigger Finger** – practice moving just the trigger finger without moving the other fingers (this is one of the keys to trigger control)

3. **Develop "See Speed"** – look at drivers in the oncoming lane, gradually increase your ability to describe them (develops your mind's ability to rapidly process visual information)

4. **Develop "Focus Speed"** – shift eyes from something at front sight distance into infinity rapidly, back and forth (allows eyes to rapidly shift to front sight)

5. **Be In Your Best Physical Condition** – both aerobic and strength conditioning can mitigate the body's stress response allowing peak performance.

6. **Get Lots of Sleep** – being well rested enhances learning and will mitigate the effects of the body's stress response.

7. **Dry Practice** – nobody has enough range time and ammunition to optimize their shooting skills. Dry practice allows you to develop and refine all of the motor programs needed to shoot well. Regularly practiced skills are very resistant to the effects of stress.

Sample Dry Practice Drills

Live fire performance will almost never exactly match your dry practice performance. Gripping the gun hard during dry practice and increasing the frequency of dry practice will mitigate this.

Presentation

Basic:
10 – Step 1's
10 – Step 1 and 2's
10 – Step 1, 2, and 3's
10 – Step 1, 2, 3, and 4 with trigger prepped
10 – Step 1, 2, 3, and 4 with trigger press.
Advanced:
Use a thumb tack or similar sized object as a target.
Draw and fire at 25% speed – call every "shot."
Draw and fire at 50% speed – call every "shot."
Draw and fire at 75% speed – call every "shot."
Draw and fire at 100% speed – call every "shot."

Trigger Control

Basic: Place an empty case on the front sight of the pistol. Press the trigger slowly and carefully so that the empty case does not fall off.
Advanced: Place an empty case on the front sight of the pistol. Press the trigger as quickly as possible so that the empty case does not fall off.

Recoil Recover & Trigger Control

Sights Meet Trigger 1 by Gabe White

Preparation: Start with the trigger pressed and finger holding the trigger to the rear, cock hammer or cycle slide enough for mechanism to be ready to reset, regrip gun properly, raise the front sight slightly in simulated recoil with eyes pointed at target spot but with visual awareness of the high front sight.

Actual Drill: Simultaneously reset trigger and drive the front sight to the target spot – when gun-target alignment is sufficient to hit, press the trigger.

Vary the targets! Experiment with pressing the trigger with the front sight still in motion v. stopped, and steeper or more gradual application of increasing pressure on the trigger.

Suggested Times (per Jim Higginbotham)

Skill	Basic	Int.	Adv.
Draw & Fire from Holster*	1.8	1.3	1.0
1 Shot from Ready*	1.0	0.7	0.5
Speed Reload	2.0	1.5	1.0
Emergency Reload	2.5	2.0	1.5
Tactical Reload	6.0	5.0	4.0
Reload With Retention	3.5	2.7	2.0
Type 1/2 Clearance	2.0	1.5	1.0
Type 3 Clearance	6.0	5.0	4.0

*Assumes 8” target at 7 yard target

Add 0.2 for a concealment or security holster or flaps on magazine pouches

Live Fire Drills

Recommended Drills (In Rough Order of Difficulty)

Drill	Rounds	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced
Pistol Drills				
Dot Torture	30	3 yards	5 yards	7 yards
5x5 Drill	5	< 5 seconds from ready	< 5 seconds from holster	
Bill Drill*	6	Clean, >5.0 seconds	Clean, >3.75 seconds	Clean, >2.25 seconds
6-5-4 Drill	6		> 4 seconds from ready	>4 seconds from holster
FAST Drill	6	>10 seconds	>7 seconds	>5 seconds
3M Test – 5 yds	9	<15 seconds	<12 seconds	<10 seconds
Casino Drill	21	>21 seconds	>18 seconds	>13 seconds
Casino Drill (Advanced)	21	>21 seconds	>18 seconds	>15 seconds
FBI Bullseye	30	240-259	260-280	281-300
Rangemaster Bullseye	30	240-259	260-280	281-300
The Test	10	75%	90%	All 9/10 ring
3M Test – 7 yds	9		<15 seconds	<10 seconds
Hateful 8	8	64 pts in 12 seconds	64 pts in 8 seconds	All 9/10 ring in 8 seconds
Super Test	30	255/300	270/300	290/300
Advanced Super Test	30	255/300	270/300	290/300
Rifle Drills				
16 Dot Drill	16	12/16	14/16	16/16
FBI Carbine Bullseye	30	255/300	270/300	290/300
Carbine Casino	15		<18 seconds	<15 seconds
Modified Navy Drill	15	40-26	10-25	<10
VTAC 100 Yard Aggregate	40			

*** -** Times assume duty rig or concealment

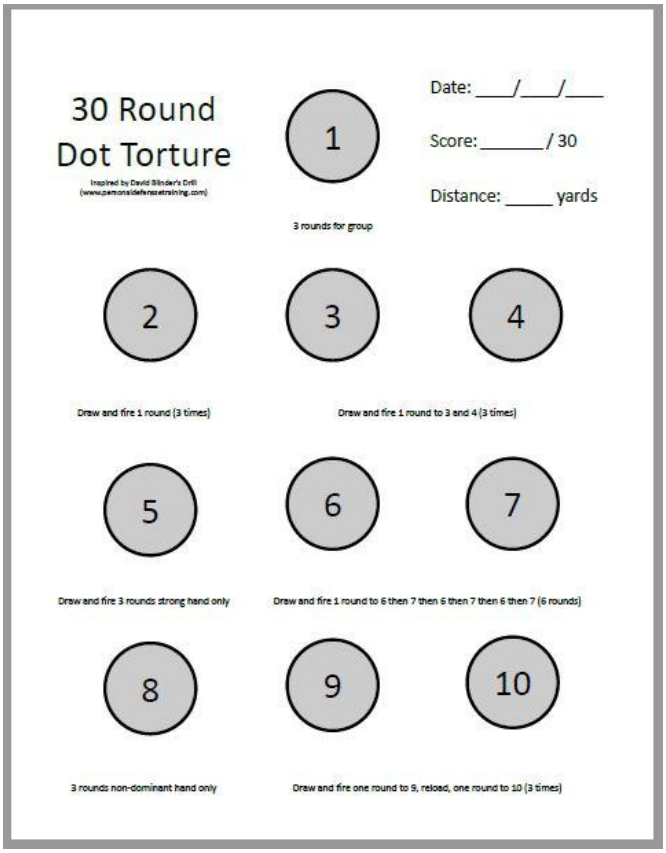
Dot Torture

Total Rounds: 30
Target: Drill Specific
Distance: 3, 5, or 7 yards
Loading: None specified, need two magazines

This drill was originally developed by David Blinder. It is an untimed test of trigger control and basic pistol manipulations. The target sheet contains ten dots and you fire the proscribed number of rounds on each dot in the way specified.

Start at 3 yards. Once you shoot the drill at 100%, increase the distance.

Scoring
Count the number of rounds hitting the dots. Score is total number of hits out of 30.



5X5 Drill

Total Rounds: 5
Target: 5” circle (9/10 ring only of B-8 bullseye)
Distance: 5 yards
Loading: At least 5 rounds in the weapon
Starting Position (Basic): Low Ready
Starting Position (Advanced): Holster

The 5x5 Drill was originally developed by Gila Hayes. It remains the best short test of the fundamentals of the basics of shooting. If a shooter cannot pass at the basic level, they need to focus on the development of the fundamentals of shooting.

On the go signal, fire 5 rounds. All rounds must be in the 5” circle. Any miss is an automatic fail.

Scoring
All rounds must be fired under time and must be hits. This is a pass/fail exercise.

9 & 10 ring only

Bill Drill

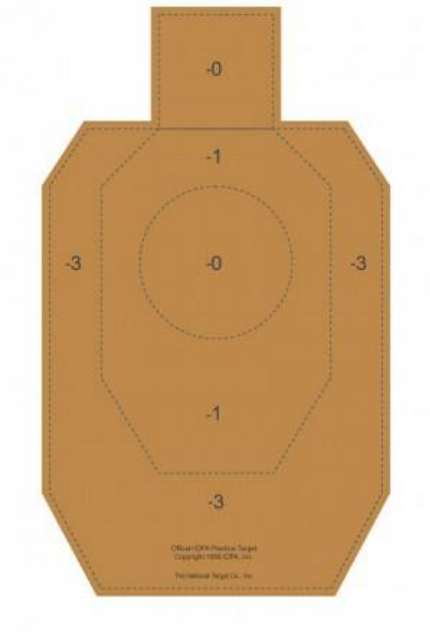
Total Rounds: 6
Target: IDPA -0 (8” circle) or USPSA A Zone (11” tall x 6” wide)
Distance: 7 yards
Loading: At least 6 rounds in the weapon
Starting Position: Holstered

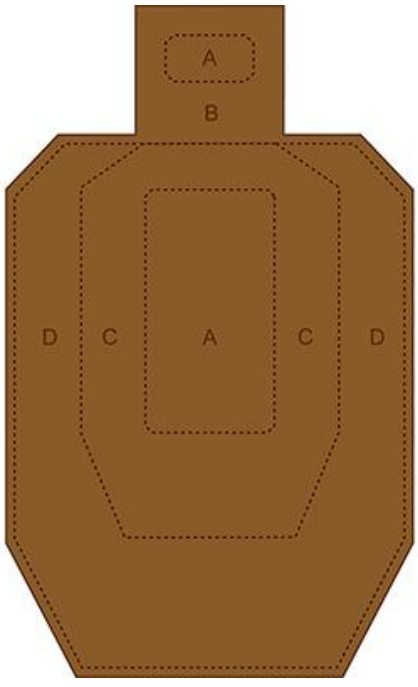
The Bill Drill was originally developed by Bill Wilson. It remains the best short test of the fundamentals of shooting at speed.

On the go signal, draw and fire 6 rounds. All rounds must be in the 8” circle or 11x6” box. Any miss is an automatic fail.

Scoring
Is based on raw time.

Basic – Less than 5 seconds from a concealment or a duty rig.
Intermediate – Less than 3.5 seconds from a concealment or duty rig.
Advanced – Less than 2.25 seconds from a concealment or duty rig.





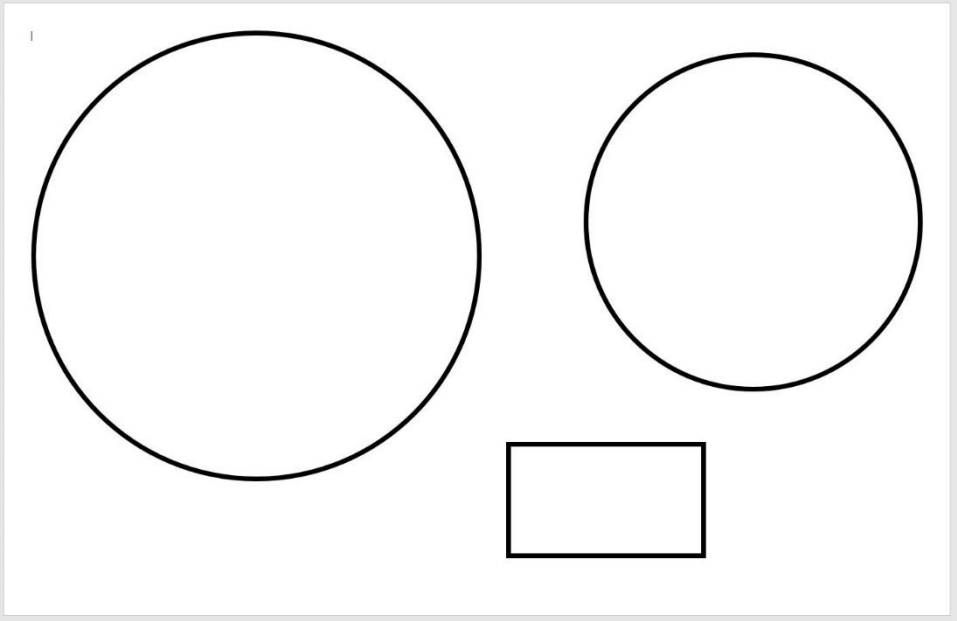
6-5-4 Drill

Total Rounds: 6
Target: Drill Specific (8” circle, 6” circle, 2.5”x3” rectangle)
Distance: 5 yards
Time: 4 seconds
Starting Position: Basic- Low Ready / Advanced- Holster
Gun Prep: at least 6 rounds in the gun

The 4-5-6 Drill as originally developed by Tom Givens of Rangemaster and is an excellent drill for developing deliberate shooting cadence.

On the signal, the 8” circle with 2 rounds, the rectangle with 2 rounds, and the 6” circle with two rounds.

Score is raw time plus one second per missed shot.



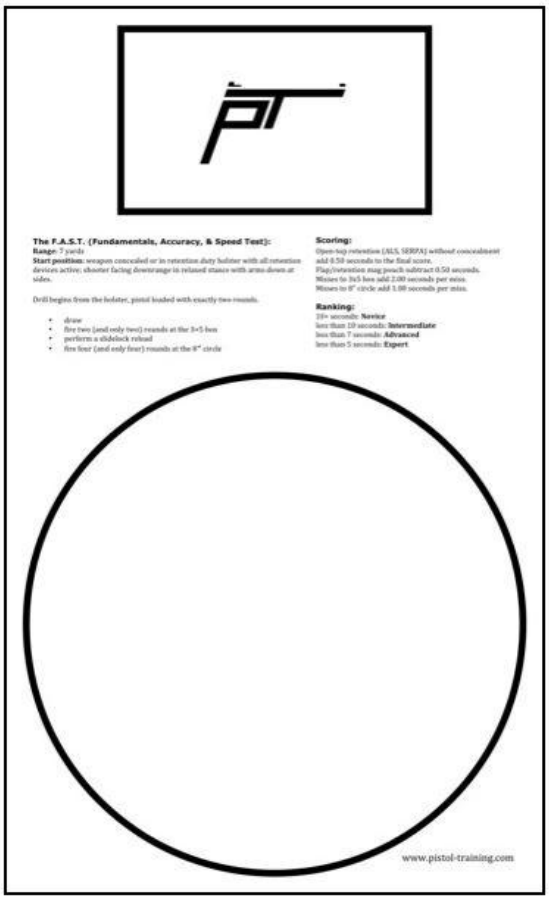
FAST Drill

Total Rounds: 6
Target: Drill Specific (8” circle and 3”x5” rectangle)
Distance: 7 yards
Starting Position: Holstered
Gun Prep: 2 rounds in the gun, a reload with at least 4 rounds

The FAST Drill as originally developed by Todd Louis Green and is an excellent drill for evaluating a shooter’s ability in a small number of rounds.

On the signal, draw and fire two rounds to the head box. Perform an emergency reload and fire 4 rounds to the body circle.

Score is raw time plus 2 seconds per missed head shot and 1 second per missed head.



3-M Test (2.0)

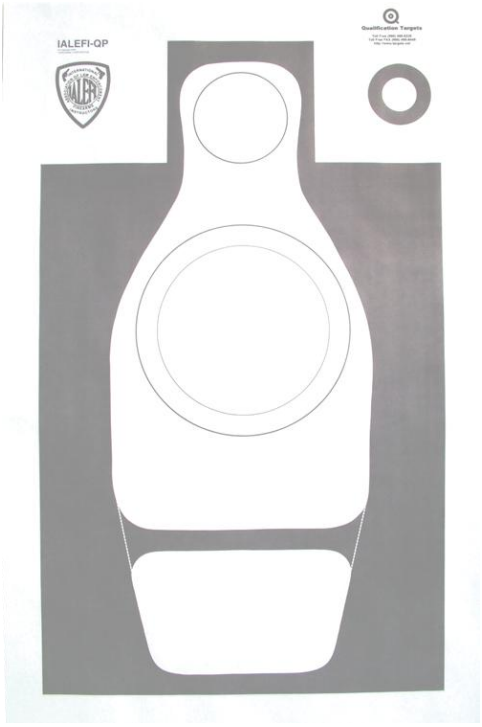
Total Rounds: 10
Target: IALEFI-QP
Distance: 5 yards (Basic), 7 yards (Advanced)
Time: Individually timed
Start Position: In Holster
Gun Prep: Loaded with 6 live rounds and one dummy (dummy not last round in magazine); 1 reload with at least 4 rounds.

Description: On signal, draw and fire a total of 10 rounds – **last round is a headshot**. Mandatory side-step on: the draw, malfunction clearance, and reload.

Scoring V1
Any miss is an automatic failure; clean drills are scored based on raw time. Goal is under 15 seconds.

Scoring V2
Hits in the 8" circle are -0 points, hits in the 10" ring are -1 point, hits in the "bottle" are -3 points and all other hits are -5 points. Missed head shot is -3 points. 3 second penalty for procedural errors - basically not side stepping when required. Points down are added to raw time at 1 second per point for final score. (12.30 second run with two points down is 14.30)

This is a more complicated drill that tests Marksmanship, Manipulation, and Movement. This is also a great test of your ability to run the gun without conscious thought. Accuracy is heavily emphasized as well with 1 second charged per point down. Ultimately, this should be shot at 7 yards as a shooter's skills improve.



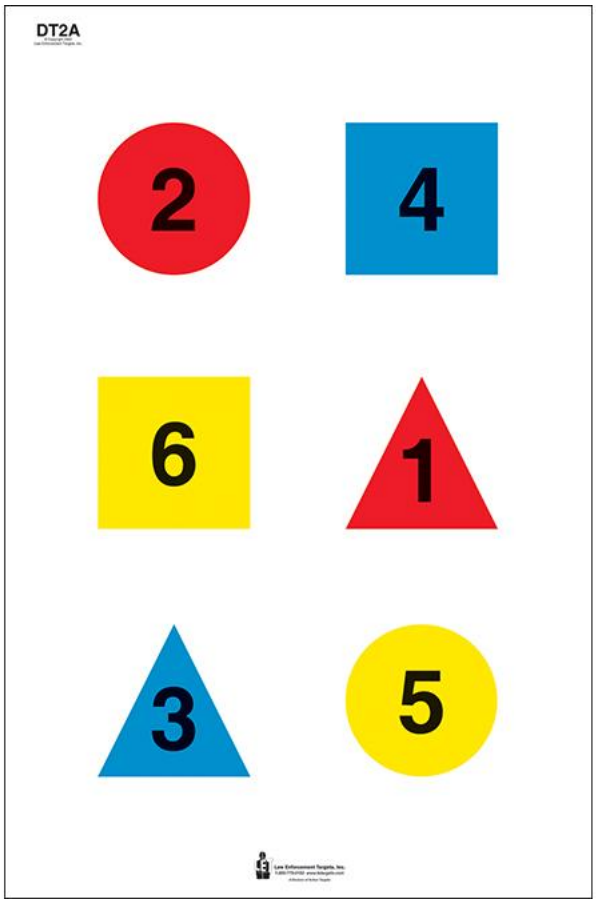
Classic Casino Drill

Total Rounds: 21
Target: DT-2A, DT-2B, or DT2C (from LETargets.Com)
Distance: 5 yards
Time: 21 seconds to pass, under 18 seconds is good, under 15 seconds is real good.
Starting Position: Holster
Gun Prep: 7 rounds in the gun, 2 magazines with 7 rounds

The Casino Drill as originally developed by Tom Givens of Rangemaster.

On the signal, engage target numbers 1-6 with the same number of rounds as the target number: 1 on target 1, 2 on target 2, 3 on target 3, 4 on target 4, 5 on target 5, 6 on target 6; reloading as necessary until all 21 rounds are fired.

Score is raw time plus one second per missed shot or shot fired on the wrong target.



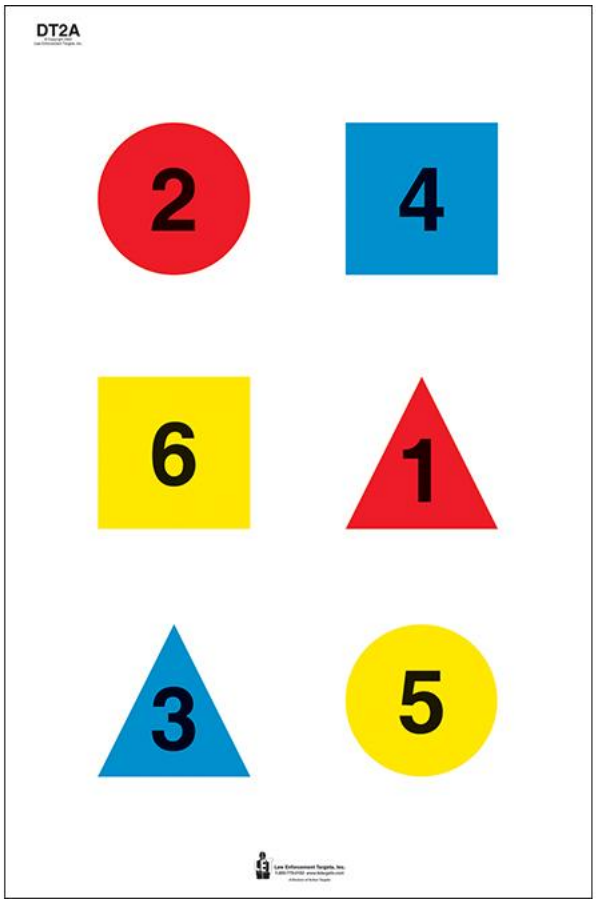
Advanced Casino Drill

Total Rounds: 21 + 1 dummy round
Target: DT-2A, DT-2B, or DT2C (from LETargets.Com)
Distance: 5 yards (7 yards for better shooters)
Time: 21 seconds to pass, under 18 seconds is good, under 15 seconds is real good.
Starting Position: Holster
Gun Prep: Load 3 magazines, one with 6 rounds, one with 7 rounds, and one with 8 rounds. Add the dummy to one of the magazines; make sure it isn't the first or last round in that magazine.

The Casino Drill as originally developed by Tom Givens of Rangemaster.

On the signal, engage target numbers 1-6 with the same number of rounds as the target number: 1 on target 1, 2 on target 2, 3 on target 3, 4 on target 4, 5 on target 5, 6 on target 6; reloading as necessary until all 21 rounds are fired.

Score is raw time plus one second per missed shot or shot fired on the wrong target.



FBI Firearms Instructor Bullseye Course

Target: FBI Bullseye (substitute NRA B-8 only including the 7-8-9-10 rings)
Loading: All stages start with the weapon loaded with 5 rounds
Starting Position: Ready Pistol, all stages

Stage 1
25 yards: 10 rds in 4 minutes

Stage 2
15 yards: 5 rds in 15 seconds
15 yards: 5 rds in 15 seconds

Stage 3
15 yards: 5 rds in 10 seconds
15 yards: 5 rds in 10 seconds

Scoring
Total of points fired under time. 300 points maximum. 260 points to pass at instructor level with both hands. 240 points to pass at the instructor level one-handed.

Rangemaster Bullseye Course

Total Rounds: 30
Target: FBI Bullseye (substitute NRA B-8 only including the 7-8-9-10 rings)
Loading: All stages start with the weapon loaded with 5 rounds
Starting Position: Ready Pistol, all stages

Stage 1 – 25 yds
5 rounds in 1 minute

Stage 2 – 15 yds
5 rounds in 15 seconds

Stage 3 – 15 yards
5 rounds in 10 seconds

Stage 4 – 7 yards
5 rounds – Emergency Reload – 5 rounds in 15 seconds

Stage 5 – 5 yards
5 rounds in 5 seconds

Scoring
Total of points fired under time. 300 points maximum. 270/300 (90%) to pass.

The Test (Standard Version)

Total Rounds: 8
Target: NRA B-8 (only 8-9-10 rings scored)
Distance: 10 yards
Time: 10 seconds
Starting Position: Low Ready
Gun Prep: 10 rounds in weapon

Draw and fire 10 rounds on a bulls-eye for score. Maximum time is 10 seconds. Maximum score is 100 points within time.

This standard has a long tradition and is arguably the single best test of field relevant marksmanship. A solid shooter should be able to shoot 90% on this test; the other, higher standard is with all rounds in the black of the bulls-eye. The target is supposed to be a B-8 repair center which only includes the 8, 9, & 10 rings.

The Test (Single Stack Version)

Total Rounds: 8
Target: NRA B-8 (only 8-9-10 rings scored)
Distance: 10 yards
Time: 10 seconds
Starting Position: In Holster
Gun Prep: 8 rounds in weapon

Draw and fire 8 rounds on a bulls-eye for score. Maximum time is 10 seconds. Maximum score is 80 points within time.

This standard has a long tradition and is arguably the single best test of field relevant marksmanship. A solid shooter should be able to shoot 90% (72 points) on this test; the other, higher standard is with all rounds in the black of the bulls-eye. The target is supposed to be a B-8 repair center which only includes the 8, 9, & 10 rings.

Hateful 8

Total Rounds: 8
Target: NRA B-8 (only 8-9-10 rings scored)
Distance: 8 yards
Par Time: 8 seconds
Starting Position: In Holster
Gun Prep: 4 rounds in weapon, 2 in 1st magazine, 2 in 2nd magazine

Draw and fire 8 rounds on a bulls-eye for score. Par time is 8 seconds.

This drill is an excellent test of the ability to shift focus appropriately. It is very easy to worry about the reloads and fail to keep rounds in the desired areas. The target is supposed to be a B-8 repair center which only includes the 8, 9, & 10 rings. A basic level run would be all rounds in the 8 ring or better in 12 seconds. An intermediate run would be all rounds in the 8 ring or better in 8 seconds. An advanced run would be all rounds in the 9 or 10 ring in 8 seconds.

Super Test

Total Rounds: 30
Target: NRA B-8 (only 8-9-10 rings scored)
Distance: 5 / 10 / 15 yards
Time: 5 / 10 / 15 seconds
Starting Position: Low Ready
Gun Prep: 10 rounds in weapon per string

1 - 5 yards
Fire 10 rounds in 5 seconds

2 - 10 yards
Fire 10 rounds in 10 seconds

3 - 15 yards
Fire 10 rounds in 15 seconds

Scoring
Basic – 70% or 210 points
Intermediate – 80% or 240 points
Advanced – 90% or 270 points

Advanced Super Test

Total Rounds: 30
Target: NRA B-8 (only 8-9-10 rings scored)
Distance: 5 / 10 / 15 yards
Time: 5 / 10 / 15 seconds
Starting Position: Holster
Gun Prep: 10 rounds in weapon per string

1 - 5 yards
Draw and fire 10 rounds in 5 seconds

2 - 10 yards
Draw and fire 10 rounds in 10 seconds

3 - 15 yards
Draw and fire 10 rounds in 15 seconds

Scoring
Basic – 85% or 255 points
Intermediate – 90% or 270 points
Advanced – 97% or 290 points

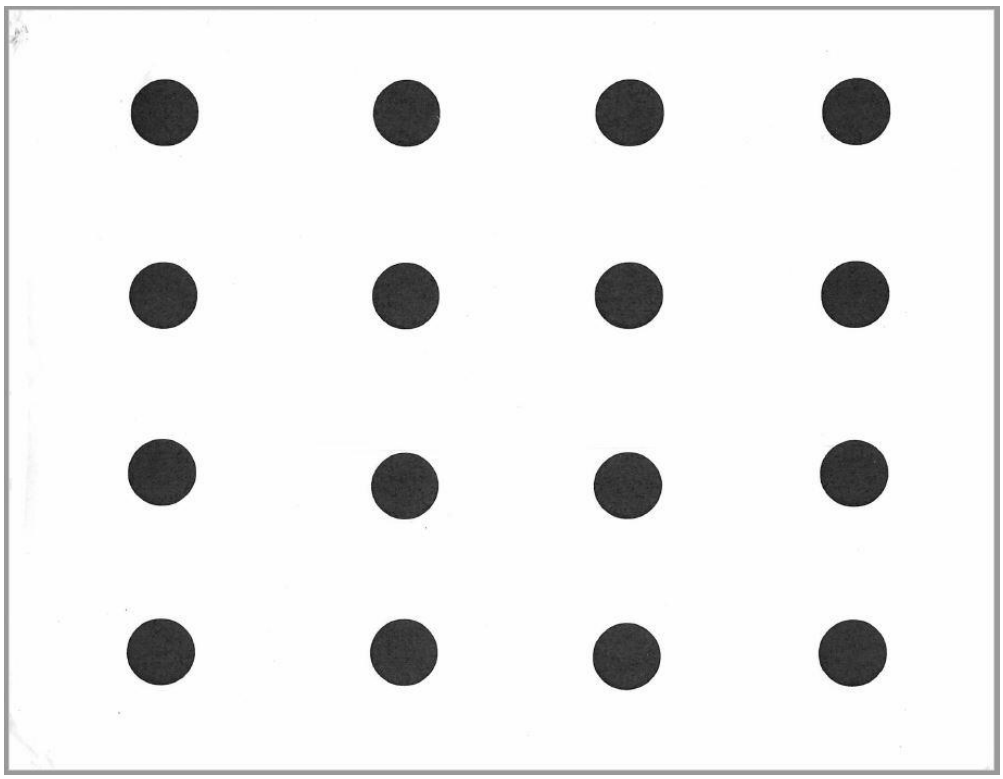
FBI 16 Dots Drill

Target: Drill Specific
Gun Prep: Magazine loaded with at least 16 rounds
Starting Position: Low Ready
Distance: 7 yards

This drill was developed by Special Agent Curtis Parter of the FBI as part of their Patrol Rifle Instructor program. It is an untimed drill to develop trigger control and an understanding of sight offset.

When the drill starts, fire one round to each dot.

Scoring
Total number of dots hit. Basic competence is 10/16 dots. Intermediate level is 12/16 dots. Advanced is 16/16 dots.



FBI Carbine Bullseye Course

Target: FBI Bullseye (substitute NRA B-8 only including the 7-8-9-10 rings)
Gun Prep: Magazines of 30 rounds
Starting Position: Low Ready

Stage 1 – 50 Yards
Weapon: Cruiser Ready
Start Position: Standing

Load, move to prone and fire 10 rounds in 90 seconds

Stage 2 – 25 Yards
Weapon: Loaded
Start Position: Standing, low ready

From low ready, fire 10 rounds in 60 seconds.

Stage 3 – 15 Yards
Weapon: Loaded
Start Position: Standing, low ready

From low ready, fire 5 rounds in 10 seconds.

Stage 4 – 7 Yards
Weapon: Loaded
Start Position: Standing, low ready

From low ready, fire 5 rounds in 7 seconds.

Scoring (Suggested)
Total of points fired. 300 points maximum. 255+ (85%) points for basic competence. 270+ (90%) for intermediate competence. 290 (97%) for advanced competence.

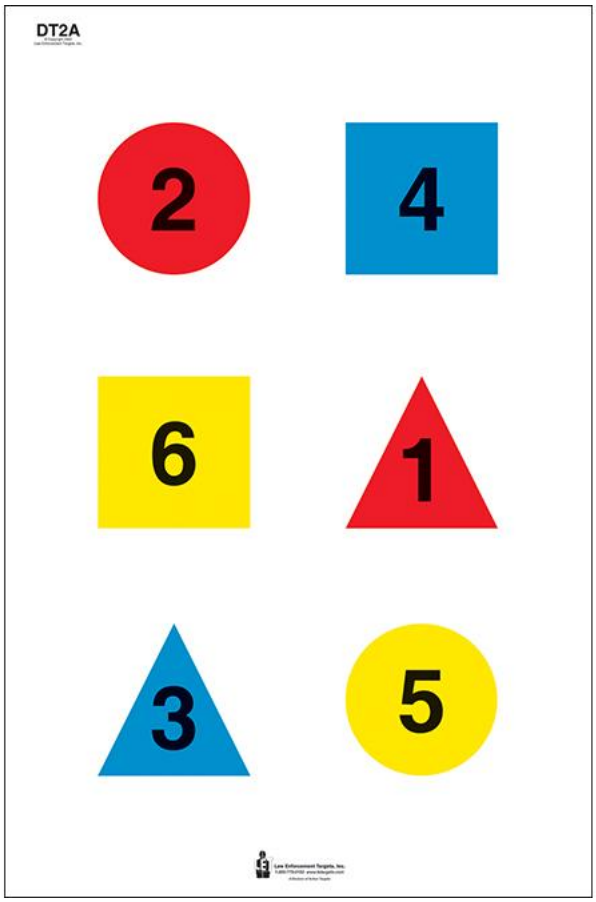
Carbine Casino Drill

Total Rounds: 15
Target: DT-2A, DT-2B, or DT2C (from LETargets.Com)
Distance: 15 yards
Time: Goal is less than 15 seconds
Starting Position: Low Ready
Gun Prep: Magazines loaded with 7 and 8 rounds, randomly load with one.

This drill incorporates the need to consider sight offset, the needs for deliberate shooting, and a reload.

On the signal, engage target numbers 1-6 with the same number of rounds as the target number: 1 on target 1, 2 on target 2, 3 on target 3, 4 on target 4, and 5 on target 5; reloading as necessary until all 15 rounds are fired.

Score is raw time plus one second per missed shot or shot fired on the wrong target.



Modified Navy Drill

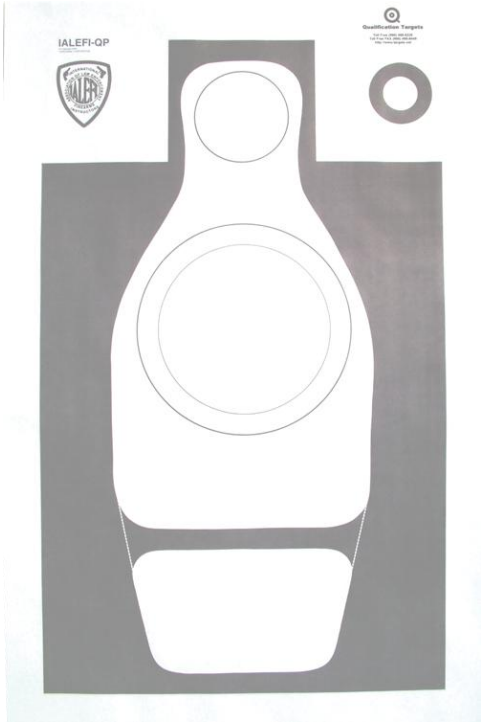
Total Rounds: 15
Target: Any with an 8” circle
Distance: 50 yards
Time: Individually timed
Start Position: Low Ready
Gun Prep: Load 3 magazines of 5, load rifle with one magazine

On start signal:

- Fire 5 rounds from off-hand
- Reload
- Move to kneeling and fire 5 rounds from kneeling
- Reload
- Move to prone and fire 5 rounds from prone.

Scoring (Lower Score is better):
Par time is 25 seconds
Every second over par +2 points
Every miss +5 points
Every second under par -1 point.
Start with 0 points, add up all penalties/time bonuses

Under 40 points to pass
Marksman 26-40
Sharpshooter: 10-25
Expert: 10 or under



Viking Tactics 100 yard Carbine Aggregate Drill

Total Rounds: 40
Target: B-8 Bulleye
Distances: 100, 75, 50, 25 yards
Time: 60 seconds per string
Start Position: Low Ready
Gun Prep: 2 magazines of 20

100 yards: From low ready, move to prone and fire 10 rounds in 60 seconds
75 yards: From low ready, move to sitting and fire 10 rounds in 60 seconds
50 yards: From low ready, move to kneeing and fire 10 rounds in 60 seconds
25 yards: From low ready, fire 10 rounds in 60 seconds from standing

Scoring:
1) Any hit in the 9 or 10 ring of the bullseye counts as 10 points.
2) Any other hits are scored as “0”