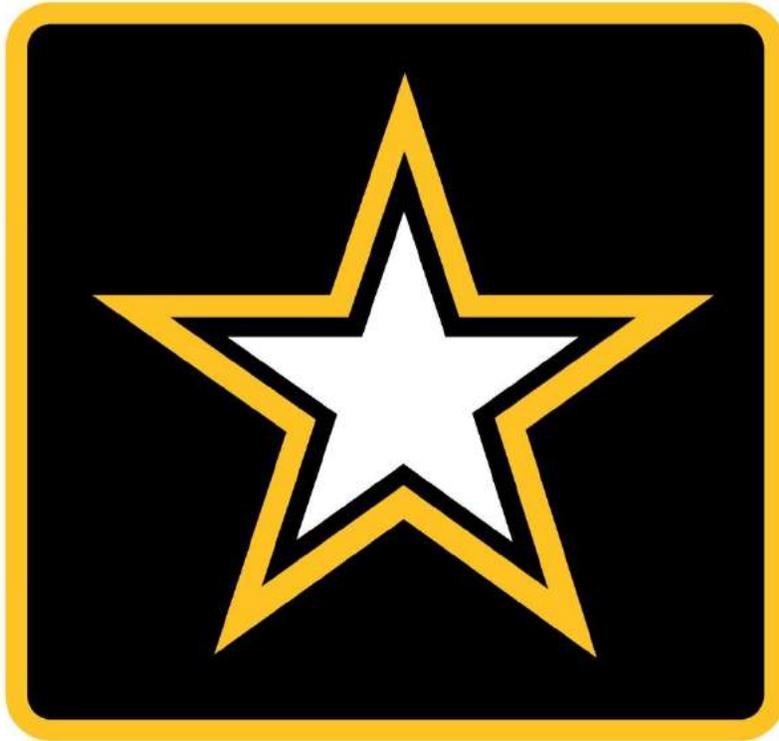


# TC 3-22.35 Supplement



# PISTOL GOLD BOOK

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This Supplemental is intended to expound upon the information found in TC 3-22.35. The information has been provided by United States Army Marksmanship Unit and has been approved for release by United States Army Infantry School within the Maneuver Center of Excellence.

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# Chapter 1 FIREARMS SAFETY AND WEAPONS HANDLING

## RULES OF FIREARMS SAFETY

- 1-1. To effectively and safely handle weapons, Soldiers must apply the rules of firearms safety. These rules integrate the three components of weapons handling. They provide redundant safety measures when handling any weapon. This redundancy allows for multiple fail-safe measures to provide the maximum level of safety in both training and operational environments. A Soldier would have to violate two of the rules of firearms safety to injure or kill another.

*Note.* Unit SOPs, range SOPs, or the operational environment may dictate additional safety protocols; however, the rules of firearms safety are always applied. If a unit requires Soldiers to violate these safety rules for any reason, such as for the use of blanks, the unit commander must take appropriate risk mitigation actions.

- 1-2. Soldiers must treat any weapon as if it is loaded and prepared to fire. Whether or not a weapon is loaded should not affect how a Soldier handles the weapon in any instance. Soldiers must take the appropriate actions to ensure the weapon's status at all times.
- 1-3. Never point the weapon at anything you do not intend to destroy. Soldiers must be cognitively aware of the orientation of their weapon's muzzle and what is in the path of the projectile if the weapon fires. There are instances where violating this rule is unavoidable. When this occurs, the Soldier must minimize the amount of time his muzzle is oriented toward people or objects he does not intend to shoot, while simultaneously applying the other three rules of firearms safety.
- 1-4. Keep finger straight and out of the trigger guard until ready to fire. Soldiers must not place their finger on the trigger unless they intend to fire the weapon. Mechanical safety devices on a weapon can fail and are not the sole means of safe operation. Additionally, some weapons the Soldier may operate do not have a traditional mechanical safety. The Soldier is the most important safety feature on any weapon. Place the weapon on safe or decocked when a target is not present. If the weapon does not have a traditional mechanical safe, the trigger finger acts as the primary safety.
- 1-5. Ensure positive identification of the target and its surroundings. The disciplined Soldier knows the target and what is beyond, in front of, and surrounding it. The Soldier is responsible for all bullets fired from their weapon, including the projectile's final destination. Application of this rule minimizes the possibility of fratricide, collateral damage, or damage to infrastructure or equipment.

### For additional weapons safety ensure

- 1-6. The weapon is safe to operate. Just like other tools, pistols need regular maintenance to remain operational. Regular cleaning and proper storage are a part of the pistol's general If there is any question concerning a pistol's ability to function, a knowledgeable gunsmith should look at it.



- 1-7. Know how to use the pistol safely. Before handling a weapon, learn how it operates. Know how to safely open and close the action and remove any ammunition from the pistol or magazine. Get familiar with the basic parts. Using the owner's manual, learn to disassemble and re-assemble the pistol. Remember that a pistol's mechanical safety devices are never foolproof. Nothing can ever replace safe gun handling.
- 1-8. Use only the correct ammunition for your weapon
- 1-9. Wear eye and ear protection as appropriate. Pistols are loud and the noise can cause hearing damage. They can also emit debris and hot gas that could cause eye injury. For these reasons, shooters and spectators should always wear shooting glasses and hearing protection.
- 1-10. Never use alcohol or drugs before or while shooting. Alcohol and other drugs are likely to impair normal mental and physical bodily functions. The combination of alcohol or drugs with weapons is a dangerous mix.
- 1-11. Always practice safe weapons handling to make it habitual. Never take short cuts when it comes to safety. Insist those around you follow these rules. Be aware that certain types of weapons and many shooting activities require additional safety precautions.

DRAFT

## Chapter 2 PRINCIPLES OF OPERATION

This chapter covers the basic operation of the M9 pistol. Included are clearing, loading, and some additional details about the operation of the trigger and decocking / safety lever. For additional information please refer to TM 9-1005-317-10. Figure 2-1 depicts the basic components of the M9 Pistol.



1. Receiver
2. Slide
3. Barrel
4. Front Sight
5. Rear Sight
6. Magazine Catch
7. Disassembly Lever
8. Trigger
9. Slide Stop
10. Decocking / Safety Lever

Figure 2-1. Pistol components.

### CLEARING PROCEDURES

2-1. Clearing the pistol to ensure there is unloaded and cannot fire is the first step for maintenance or operation. Use the following steps to clear the M9 Pistol.



Figure 2-2. Remove the magazine

- a. Keep pistol pointed in a safe direction.
- b. Move the decocking / safety lever to the down position if it is not already there.
- c. Remove the magazine. Figure 2-2
- d. Pull slide to the rear ejecting any chambered ammunition and lock the slide to the rear.
- e. Inspect the chamber and magazine well to ensure there is no ammunition or brass





Figure 2-3. Inspect both chamber and magazine well.

## LOADING

- 2-2. To load the M9 Pistol
- Keep pistol pointed in a safe direction.
  - Move the decocking / safety lever to the down position if it is not already there.
  - Lock the slide to the rear.



Figure 2-4. Loading new magazine.

- Insert a loaded magazine. Press it firmly into the pistol with the palm of the hand while listening for an audible click. This is the magazine catch engaging the magazine. Figure 2-4
- Depress the slide release lever. This will allow the slide to move forward, chambering a round. The hammer will automatically decock if the decocking / safety lever is in the down position. Move the decocking / safety lever to the off position to prepare the pistol to fire. Figure 2-5



Figure 2-5. Regrip pistol and prepare to fire.

### Optional procedure for loading with the slide forward



- a. Keep pistol pointed in a safe direction.
- b. Move the decocking / safety lever to the down position if it is not already there.
- c. Insert a loaded magazine. Press it firmly into the pistol with the palm of the hand while listening for an audible click. This is the magazine catch engaging the magazine. Loading with the slide forward will require more force to insert the magazine than with the slide to the rear.
- d. Grasp the slide firmly at the serrations as shown in Figure 2-6. Pull all the way to the rear and release. This will allow the slide to move forward, as above, chambering a round. The hammer will automatically decock if the decocking / safety lever is in the down position.

Figure 2-6. Grasp slide to pull to the rear.

Regardless of the loading procedure Soldiers must decock the M9 pistol after loading unless they intend to fire immediately!

### **OPERATIONAL NOTE: THE DOUBLE ACTION / SINGLE ACTION TRIGGER AND THE DECOCKING / SAFETY LEVER**

2-3. The M9 pistol has two modes of operation, double action and single action. If the hammer is down (forward) and the decocking / safety lever is in the up position as shown in Figure 2-7, the

action of pulling the trigger moves the hammer back, compresses the mainspring, and then releases the hammer to fire the shot. This, the double action mode, requires more than 10 pounds of force on the trigger.



*Figure 2-7. M9 pistol prepared for double action fire.*

2-4. Once fired the hammer is moved back and the mainspring compressed by the slide. The sear now holds the cocked hammer. Figure 2-8 shows the hammer in this position. To fire the pistol again, pull the trigger with a little more than 4 pounds of force. This is single action. See Figure 2-8. Notice the cocked hammer and the trigger are in a different position than in Figure 2-7.



*Figure 2-8. M9 pistol prepared for single action fire.*

2-5. The decocking / safety lever performs multiple functions on the M9. When it is in the down (safe) position it disengages the trigger, moves the rear portion of the firing pin out of position, and lowers the cocked hammer to the down position. In the up (fire) position it allows the pistol to fire normally. Using the decocking / safety lever is the best and safest way to lower the hammer on an M9 pistol.

## M9 MAINTENANCE - CLEANING AND INSPECTION

2-6. The following are instructions on the cleaning and inspection of the M9 pistol. Using this information along with that provided in TM 9-1005-317-10 will keep the pistols operational and greatly enhance reliability. The pistol should always be unloaded when performing maintenance.

### Disassembly



Figure 2-9. Removing the slide assembly from the receiver.



Figure 2-10. Remove the recoil spring and guide rod.

- a. Depress the slide stop, and let the slide move forward.
- b. Hold the pistol in your right hand with the muzzle slightly raised.
- c. Press the disassembly lever button with your index finger.
- d. Rotate the disassembly lever downward until it stops.
- e. Pull the slide and barrel assembly forward, and remove it from the receiver. Figure 2-9
- f. Carefully and lightly compress the recoil spring and spring guide. At the same time, lift up and remove them. Figure 2-10
- g. Separate the recoil spring from the spring guide.
- h. Push in on the locking block plunger while pushing the barrel forward slightly.
- i. Lift and remove the locking block and barrel assembly from the slide. Figure 2-11.



Figure 2-11. Removing the barrel assembly.

## Cleaning

2-7. Cleaning the M9 once disassembled is an easy process.

- a. Wipe all parts with a rag to remove old / dirty oil, dirt, and residue from firing.
- b. To remove hard or built up dirt and residue use a toothbrush, rag, or a dental pick. Be careful not to cut the aluminum frame with the dental pick. The interior surfaces of the slide hold most of this buildup.
- c. Clean the bore and chamber with a cleaning rod and bore brush. This will remove fouling from the barrel. The bore brush is for cleaning the bore and chamber only.
- d. Lubricate. The pistol will function much better and is less prone to breakage when properly oiled. Refer to TM 9-1005-317-10 for the proper lubricant. Place a drop of oil on each side of the locking block where it engages the slide and in the grooves on each side of the slide where it engages the frame.
- e. Magazines. It is important to also clean and inspect the magazines. Dust, dirt, and residue from firing can accumulate in the magazines and cause malfunctions
- f. Inspection. Inspection is an important part of the cleaning process. Inspecting parts of the disassembled pistol will allow the Soldier to avoid problems on the range and fix problems before they happen. Figure 2-12 below highlights some of the problems. Cracks are easily spotted when the pistol is disassembled. Pay close attention to the locking block. Cracks may develop many rounds prior to failure. Once this part breaks, the pistol is inoperable until installation of a replacement.



Figure 2-12. Images of cracked or broken locking blocks and barrel.

### Assembly

2-8. Assemble the M9 pistol using the following steps.

- a. Grasp the slide with the bottom facing up.
- b. With your other hand, grasp the barrel assembly with the locking block facing up.
- c. Insert the muzzle into the forward end of the slide and, at the same time, lower the rear of the barrel assembly by aligning the extractor cutout with the extractor.
- d. Insert the recoil spring onto the recoil spring guide.



Figure 2-13. Properly assembled slide, barrel, recoil spring, and guide rod.

- e. Insert the end of the recoil spring and the recoil spring guide into the recoil spring housing. At the same time, compress the recoil spring guide until it seats fully on the locking block cutaway. Figure 2-13 below depicts a properly assembled slide, barrel assembly, and recoil spring.
- f. Grasp the slide and barrel assembly with the sights up, and align the slide on the receiver assembly guide rails.
- g. Push until the rear of the slide is a short distance past the rear of the receiver assembly and hold. At the same time, rotate the disassembly latch lever upward. A click indicates a positive lock.

## LOADING AND UNLOADING MAGAZINES

2-9. Load and unload magazines for the M9 using the following procedures.



Figure 2-14. M9 magazine.

## Loading a magazine

2-9. Load an M9 magazine by following these steps.



Figure 2-15. Inserting the first round.

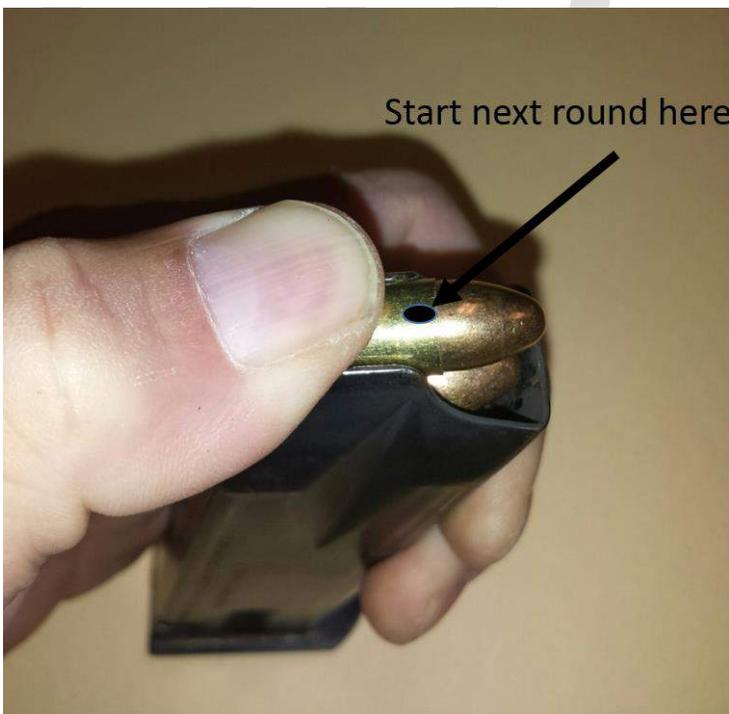


Figure 2-16. Starting additional rounds.

a. Grasp the magazine in your hand. Insert the cartridge base first by pushing down and to the rear. The rim of the ammunition must slide under the feed lips of the magazine with the bullet pointed forward.

Figure 2-15

b. Insert additional cartridges similarly. It is easiest to push down with the new cartridge just ahead of the feed lips and behind the end of the case mouth of the cartridge already in the magazine. Figure 2-16 depicts this location. Provide pressure downward and to the rear with your thumb holding the new cartridge while pushing down on the rim of the cartridge in the magazine with the thumb of the hand holding the magazine.

2-10. The magazine for the M9 pistol holds 15 rounds. Many will accept 16 but this makes inserting the magazine with the slide closed very difficult and is not recommended.

**Unloading a loaded magazine**

2-12. Push forward on the cartridge rim while allowing the cartridge to move forward, upward and out of the magazine.

DRAFT

## Chapter 3 FUNDAMENTALS OF PISTOL MARKSMANSHIP

In order to accurately engage a target with a projectile fired from a weapon, a Soldier essentially has to do just two things:

- a. Point the weapon at the target (sight alignment).
- b. Fire the weapon without moving it (trigger control).

These two steps are the two principles of shooting. They apply to all shooting, regardless of the event or type of weapon used. As you practice and study shooting, you will notice there are many techniques used to successfully accomplish a given task. These principles, however, are the same for everyone, every time.

### AIMING

3-1. Aiming is the precise alignment of the weapon in relation to the target while using sighting devices. The process of aiming a pistol includes aligning the sights with the eye and the target.

### SIGHT ALIGNMENT

3-2. Sight alignment is centering the front blade in the rear sight notch and aligning both with the shooter's eye. Due to the short sight radius of the pistol, proper sight alignment is essential for accuracy. For example, at 25 meters, a 2 millimeter error in alignment between the front and rear sight will cause the shooter's projectile to miss the point of aim by almost a foot, this will miss an E-type target.

3-3. For correct sight alignment, a shooter centers horizontally and then vertically. He first centers the front sight in the rear sight, and then he raises or lowers the top of the front sight so it is level with the top of the rear sight. While this sounds simple, the difficulty lies in maintaining this precise alignment between both sights, while minimizing the arc of movement and not disturbing sight alignment when pulling the trigger. Part of the solution to this problem lies in focusing the eye on the front sight during delivery of the shot.

Note. For more information about pulling the trigger to cause the hammer to fall without disturbing sight alignment, see the section titled "Trigger Control," in this chapter.

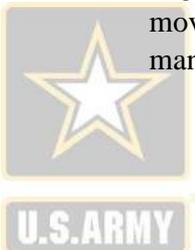
### Aspects of good sight alignment

3-4. Good sight alignment has the following attributes:

- a. Natural sight alignment
- b. Relationship of the sights
- c. Understanding of the impact of the arc of movement on sight alignment
- d. Appropriate point of focus
- e. Good sight picture

### Natural sight alignment

3-5. The shooter should grip the pistol so the front and rear sights align naturally and remain aligned without extra effort. Otherwise, the front sight will stray to one side of the rear sight notch or move above or below the horizontal surface of the rear sight. A natural grip also helps the shooter manage recoil without need for correction. Maintaining sight alignment enables the shooter to apply

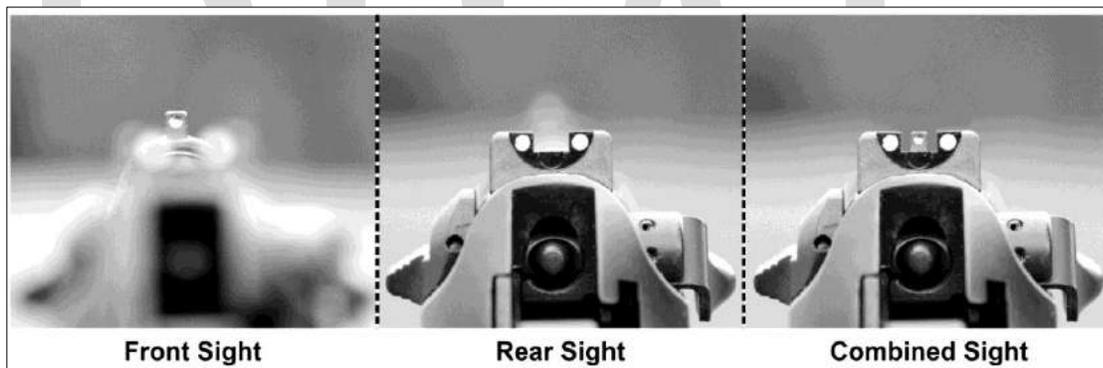


positive trigger pressure without additional effort, so it also speeds recovery. To check for natural sight alignment, perform the following steps:

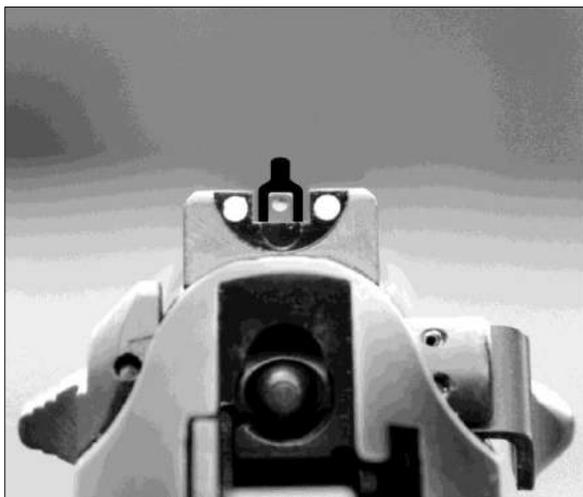
- a. Grip the pistol.
- b. Sight properly on a distant target.
- c. While maintaining grip and position, close your eyes for three to five seconds.
- d. Open your eyes and recheck for proper sight alignment.
- e. If the point of aim is disturbed, adjust your position to compensate. If the sight alignment is disturbed, adjust your grip to compensate by removing the pistol from your hand and reapplying the grip.

### **Good relationship of the sights**

3-6. Good shooters understand the relationship between the rear sight and the front sight. A shooter achieves accurate sight alignment by aligning the rear sight with the top and sides of the front sight (Figure 3-1) and holding them in alignment with the desired point of impact on the target (Figure 3-2).



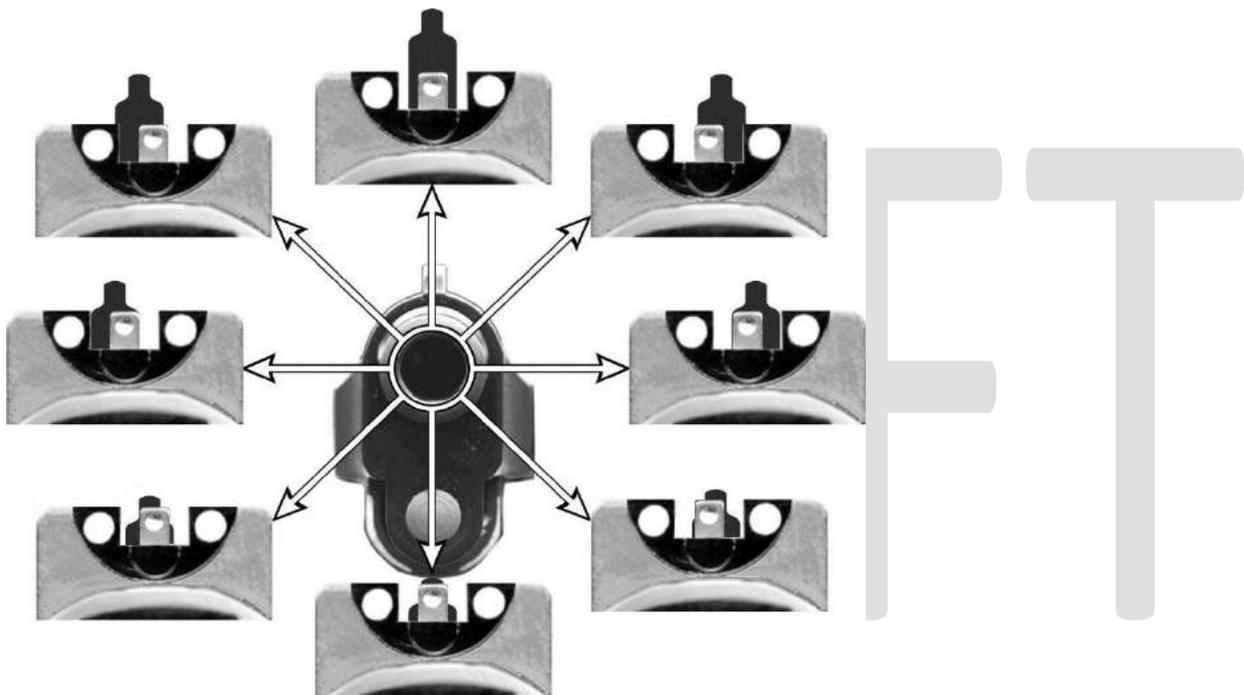
*Figure 3-1. Alignment of the rear sight with the top and sides of the front sight.*



*Figure 3-2. Alignment of the sights with the desired point of impact.*

### Impact of the wobble area on aiming

3-7. No one can hold a pistol completely still. The shooter must apply trigger control and maintain correct sight alignment while the pistol is moving in and around the center of the target. This movement of the sights on the target is the wobble area. When aiming and firing a shot, the entire system, consisting of a shooter's body and his pistol, always undergoes a degree of movement. It is important to remember that with proper sight alignment and trigger control, the shooter will hit the target as long as the front sight remains on the target. Figure 3-3 shows an example of correct sight alignment with the motion of the pistol or wobble area. If correct trigger control is applied, all of these sight pictures will result in a hit.



**ALIGN SIGHTS WITH MINIMUM ARC MOVEMENT  
(GRAPHIC DEPICTION EXAGGERATED)**

*Figure 3-3. Impact of the wobble area. If proper trigger control is applied all of these shots will, at the very least, hit the target.*

### Appropriate point of focus

3-8. The human eye cannot focus on near and far objects simultaneously. Focus on a distant object renders the up-close object indistinct, and focus on a close object does the same to the distant object. In the context of shooting, this means a shooter can focus on the sights or the target, but not both at the same time (Figure 3-4). The shooter must select a point of focus, or a point to direct his vision.

3-9. For the best control over sight alignment, the shooter should focus on the front sight, letting the target get a bit blurry. On the other hand, focusing on the target jeopardizes sight alignment allowing errors to develop. Focusing on the front sight reduces these errors.



**IMPOSSIBLE**

Simultaneous focus on both near and far objects is impossible. The human eye cannot focus on near and far objects simultaneously.



**IMPROPER**

Focus is limited to the target (sights indistinct, target distinct).  
Precise control over sight alignment not possible.  
Continuous control over relationship between the sights not possible.



**PROPER**

Focus is limited to front sight (sights distinct, target indistinct).  
Precise control over sight alignment possible.  
Continuous control over relationship between the sights possible.

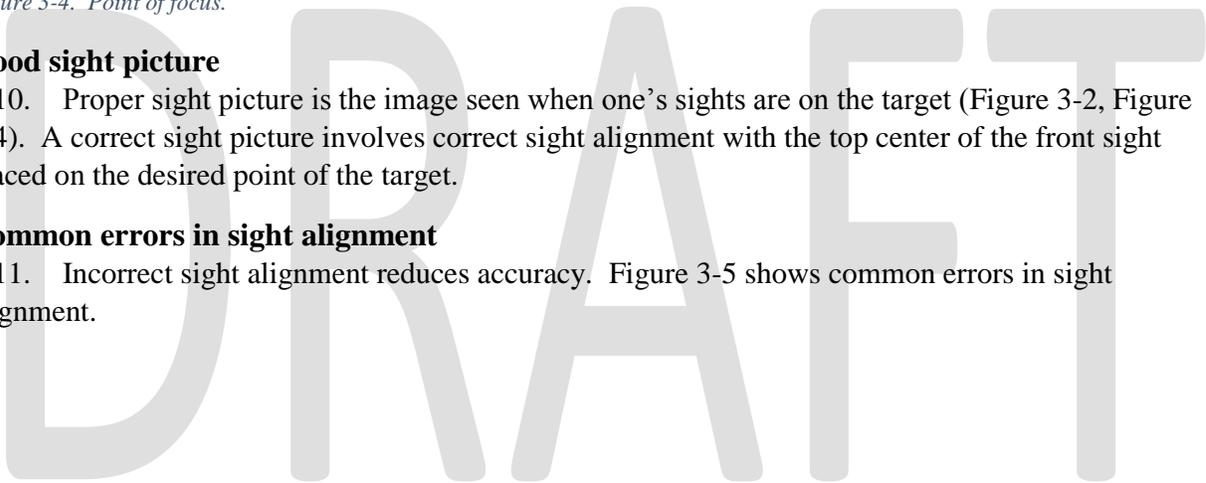
Figure 3-4. Point of focus.

**Good sight picture**

3-10. Proper sight picture is the image seen when one's sights are on the target (Figure 3-2, Figure 3-4). A correct sight picture involves correct sight alignment with the top center of the front sight placed on the desired point of the target.

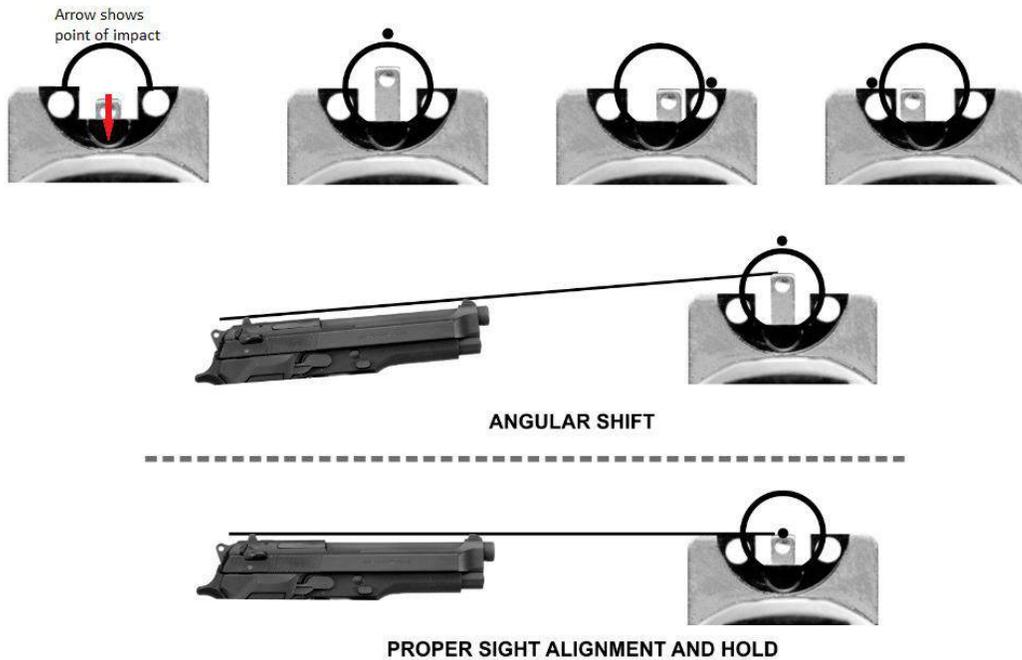
**Common errors in sight alignment**

3-11. Incorrect sight alignment reduces accuracy. Figure 3-5 shows common errors in sight alignment.



**ERROR: Angular Shift:** The shooter does not align the rear sight with the top and sides of the front sight. Instead, he locates the front sight in a different position in the rear sight notch. This accounts for a greater dispersion of the shots on the target, since bullets will deviate in the direction in which the front sight is positioned in the rear sight notch, as shown in the images below.

**CORRECTION:** Align the rear sight with the top and sides of the front sight.



**ERROR: Parallel Shift:** The arc of movement deviates in a nearly parallel error from the center of the aiming area.

**CORRECTION:** Hold the pistol perfectly still.

**Note:** The impact of this error is not as extreme as the impact of an angular shift error. Holding the pistol perfectly still is desirable but not mandatory.

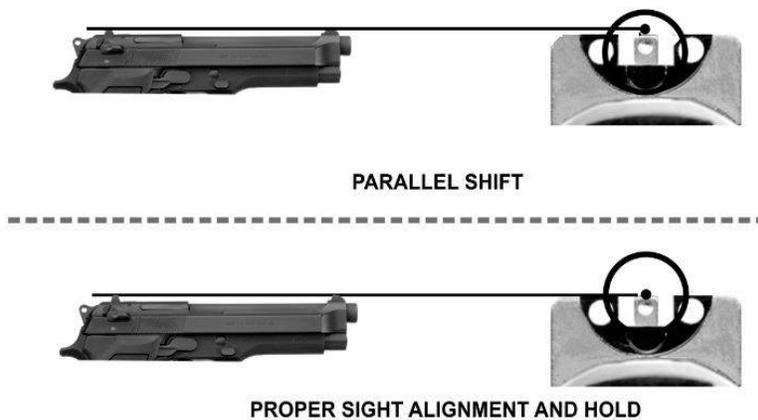


Figure 3-5. Sight alignment errors and corrections.

## TRIGGER CONTROL

3-12. Trigger control (Figure 3-6) means manipulating the trigger effectively without disturbing sight alignment. A shooter should try to pull the trigger straight to the rear, while maintaining proper

sight alignment and consistent sight picture. He takes up trigger slack (free play) first, and then continues squeezing steadily until the hammer falls.

Note. The trigger requires more than 4 pounds of force in single-action mode and at least 10 pounds in double-action mode. The shooter should know what mode he is using. He must practice squeezing the trigger both ways to develop expertise for different types of target engagements.



Figure 3-6. Trigger control.

### **ASPECTS OF GOOD TRIGGER CONTROL**

3-13. Shooters should consider the following aspects of good trigger control:

- a. Natural trigger finger placement
- b. Smooth and continuous pressure to the rear
- c. Double Action
- d. Single Action
- e. Independent movement
- f. Trigger Reset

#### **Natural trigger finger placement**

3-14. To apply correct trigger control, the shooter's trigger finger should lay naturally across the face of the trigger. Where exactly his trigger finger contacts the trigger depends on the length of the shooter's trigger finger. The trigger finger should touch only the trigger. Touching anything else, even just the frame of the pistol, can add friction and drag, pushing or pulling the pistol to one side or the other.

### **Smooth and continuous pressure to the rear**

3-15. A shooter should place his trigger finger on the trigger to apply smooth and continuous pressure straight to the rear without disturbing sight alignment. Pressure from the trigger finger applied to the right side of the trigger or pistol, will cause the strike of the bullet to be to the left. This is due to the normal hinge action of the fingers. When the fingers on the right hand are closed, as in gripping, they hinge or pivot to the left, thereby applying pressure to the left (with left-handed shooters, this action is to the right). The shooter must not apply pressure left or right but should increase trigger finger pressure straight to the rear.

### **Double-action**

3-16. The first shot from the M9 pistol is in the double-action mode (Figure 3-7). To accomplish this with proper trigger control, pull the trigger to the rear without disturbing the sight alignment. Once started, the Soldier should attempt to maintain constant trigger motion until the shot breaks. The Soldier must maintain sight alignment during this motion. He cannot simply align the sights and then squeeze the trigger. These actions must happen simultaneously.



*Figure 3-7. M9 pistol prepared for double-action firing.*

### **Single-action**

3-17. Subsequent shots are in the single action mode (Figure 3-8). Shooters will notice a significant amount of slack or motion in the trigger. Take up or pull through this slack prior to beginning the trigger control process for single-action. The shooter should now continuously increase pressure on the trigger to break the shot while maintaining sight alignment. As in the double action mode this pressure must be straight to the rear to avoid pushing shots to the side but the shooter should notice significantly less motion in the trigger than when firing double action.



Figure 3-8. M9 pistol prepared for single-action firing.

### **Independent movement**

3-18. The trigger finger should apply positive, straight back pressure on the trigger as an independent action, completely free of the other muscles of the firing hand. It is not uncommon for a shooter's trigger finger placement to be different in single action and double action.

### **Trigger reset**

3-19. Once the shooter fires a shot he must reset the trigger prior to firing the next shot. The trigger finger needs to move forward but should maintain contact with the trigger. This will help maintain consistent trigger finger placement. The trigger only needs to move forward far enough to reset. These actions need not be slow and can happen during the recoil of the pistol.

### **COMMON ERRORS IN TRIGGER CONTROL**

3-20. Improper trigger control causes more misses with a pistol than any other marksmanship fundamental. Slight off-center pressure of the trigger finger on the trigger can cause a pistol to move and disturb the shooter's sight alignment. Table 3-1 describes common errors in trigger control.

Note. Soldiers should consider the mental aspects of trigger control. The stress and self-talk that causes shooters to jerk the trigger or flinch are not created by the presence of ammunition; instead, these actions are caused by the shooter's own doubts and worries about recoil, noise, or whether the shot will be a hit or a miss.+

Table 3-1. Common errors of trigger control.

ISSUE	IDENTIFYING/CORRECTING THIS ISSUE	
<p><b>RECOIL ANTICIPATION</b></p> <p>As a Soldier begins training with the pistol, he might anticipate the recoil of the pistol. Anticipating the recoil often causes two reactions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The shooter tightens his muscles during or just before the hammer falls.</li> <li>2. The shooter fights the recoil by pushing the pistol downward.</li> </ol> <p>In either case, the rounds will not hit the point of aim.</p> <p><b>Note.</b> See the section titled “Grip” in this chapter for more information about fighting recoil by pushing the pistol downward.</p>	<p>Sympathetic tightening of the muscles of the hand as trigger pressure is applied (also called flinching)</p>	<p>To check for this issue—</p> <p>Visually check for sympathetic tightening of the muscles of the hand as trigger pressure is applied.</p> <p>Dry-fire the pistol to detect sympathetic tightening of the hand muscles.</p> <p>Anticipation errors typically cause the impact of a round to be low.</p>
<p><b>INABILITY TO SEPARATE THE ACTION OF THE TRIGGER FINGER FROM THE REST OF THE HAND</b></p> <p>Soldiers might exhibit an inability to separate the action of the trigger finger from the rest of the hand, causing them to use the whole hand to pull the trigger. This action will bring the fingertips of the firing hand into play; the pressures they exert will push the barrel down and away.</p>	<p>To ensure independent trigger action—</p> <p>Visually check for trigger finger clearance from the grip.</p> <p>Dry-fire the pistol to detect any drag or undue friction noticed in the trigger.</p>	
<p><b>TRIGGER FINGER TOUCHING THE PISTOL STOCK OR FRAME</b></p> <p>The trigger finger should not touch the stock or the frame of the pistol due to the added friction and drag on applying trigger pressure.</p>	<p>To check for this issue—</p> <p>Dry-fire a few shots while watching the front sight carefully. If the front sight moves at the instant the hammer falls, reposition the trigger finger to the left or right, up or down, on the face of the trigger.</p> <p>Repeat the dry-firing, adjusting the position of trigger finger until the release of the hammer causes no movement of the front sight in the rear sight notch.</p>	
<p><b>ACCELERATION OR “TRIGGER JERK”</b></p> <p>Acceleration is an effort to fire the pistol at the precise time the sights align with the target.</p>	<p>Acceleration occurs when the shooter sees that he has acquired a good sight picture at a target’s center of mass, and then he “snaps off” a round before he loses the sight picture. Remember sight picture and trigger control must happen simultaneously. Pull the trigger with a steady increase in pressure.</p> <p>Acceleration errors cause the impact of the round to be down and away from the shooter’s firing hand, for example, low and left for a right-handed shooter or low and right for a left-handed shooter.</p> <p>The shooter may not be aware of this error because everything “looked” correct when he fired. Consider ball and dummy drills to show the shooter what he is doing incorrectly.</p>	

## Chapter 4 POSITIONS

As with the rifle, a steady position enhances your ability to apply the fundamentals. There is no “cookie cutter” method for putting Soldiers into proper shooting positions, because each shooter must be able to build a fundamentally correct position. There may be variations from the way one shooter’s position looks compared to another. Each shooter is different in body shape, size, and flexibility; but each position must enhance and support aiming, trigger control, and follow up shots.

In this section you will learn about the key elements for a good position and how to apply them when standing, kneeling, and prone.

### GRIP

4-1. A proper grip provides the shooter maximum control of the pistol. The pistol must become an extension of the hand and arm; it should replace the finger in pointing at an object.

#### Types of grip

4-2. A shooter can grip a pistol using the one-handed or two-handed grip.

Note. Before achieving the grip, the shooter will draw the pistol. For more information about drawing the pistol, see the section entitled “Draw and Presentation” located earlier in this chapter.

#### One-handed grip

4-3. A shooter always starts with a one-handed grip when drawing the pistol. Figure 4-1 shows the one-handed grip. A shooter can use this grip to engage a target in extreme situations, such as when his other hand is injured and he must continue to engage targets. The one-handed grip can serve as a training tool for learning correct trigger control. Any error in trigger control will be very apparent as there is no additional support for the pistol.



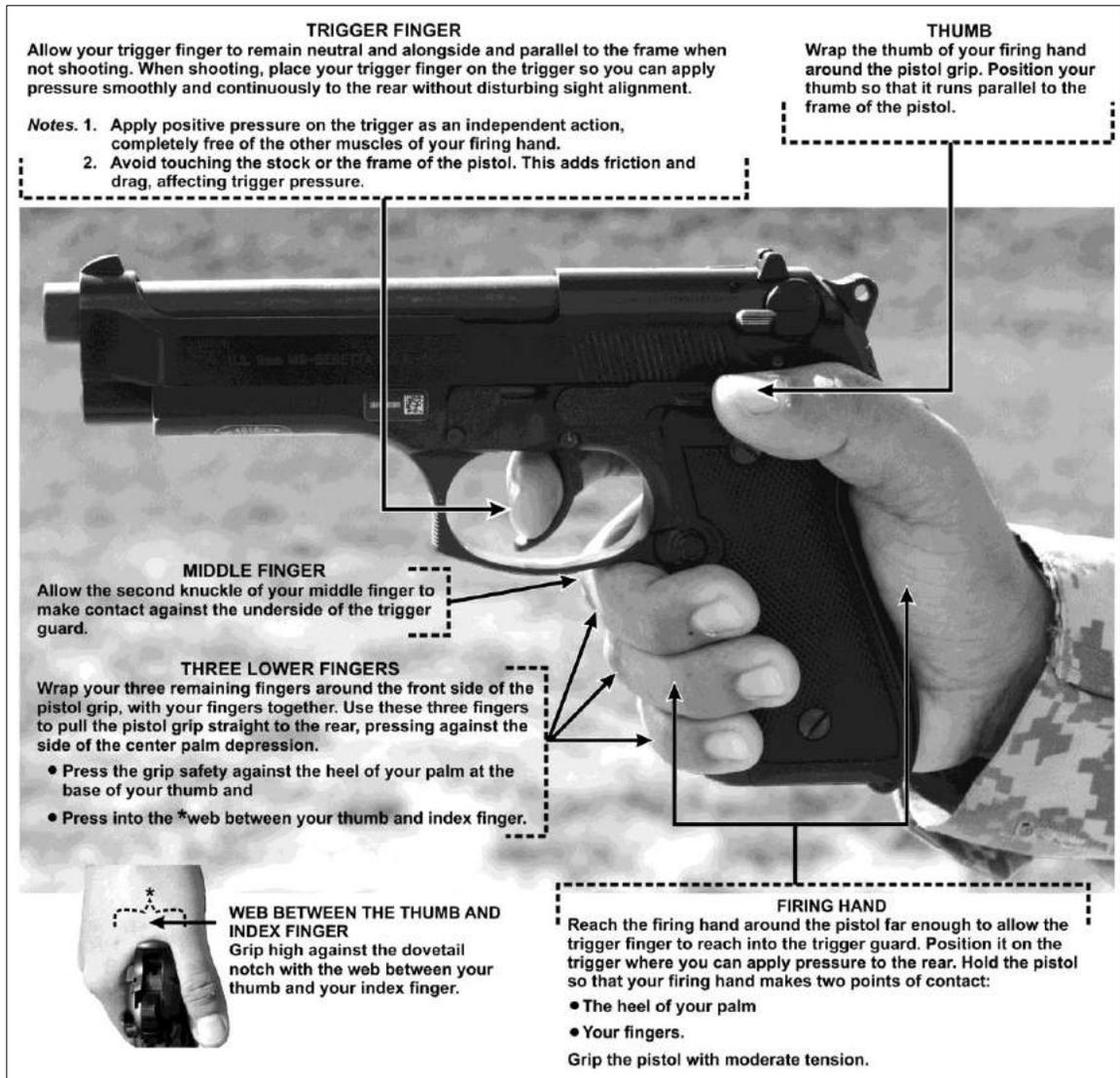


Figure 4-1. One handed grip.

## Two-handed grip

4-4. The two-handed grip allows the shooter to steady his firing hand and provide maximum support during firing. The nonfiring hand becomes a support mechanism for the firing hand by wrapping the fingers of the nonfiring hand around the firing hand. Use two-handed grips, when possible, for all pistol firing. Figure 4-2 shows the two-handed grip.

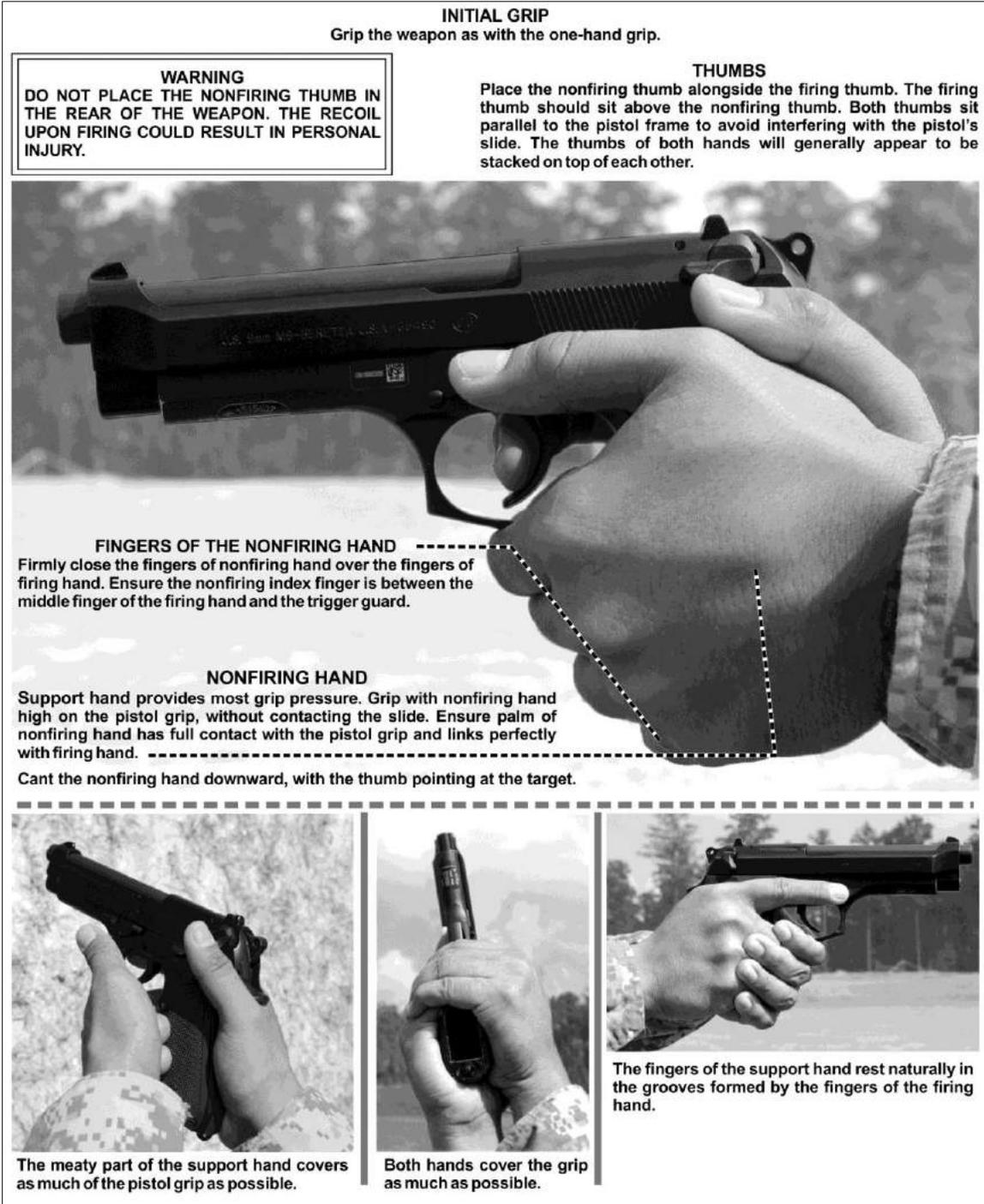


Figure 4-2. Two handed grip.

**ASPECTS OF A GOOD GRIP**

4-5. There is only one correct grip for each combination of shooter and pistol; each type of pistol has its peculiarities and the shooter must adapt to each. The shooter should find the proper grip through trial and error, practice, and analysis. After a shooter has gripped a pistol hundreds of times, he develops a high degree of sensitivity and awareness for the grip—a grip that’s just right for that

particular pistol. When practicing to achieve a proper grip, shooters should consider the following aspects of a good grip:

- a. Control of the force of recoil
- b. Multiple planes of pressure
- c. Firmness
- d. Comfort
- e. Relaxation
- f. Consistency
- g. Uniformity
- h. Leverage

### **Control over the force of recoil**

4-6. Gripping the pistol properly enables the shooter to have the fullest control over recoil and helps him drive the pistol to any subsequent targets. The shooter must control the force of recoil by transmitting it straight to the rear into both the nonfiring arm and firing arm.

4-7. Recoil against the base of the thumb can cause the pistol to twist in the hand, resulting in a shift in the grip or a bending of the wrist. Either event jeopardizes quick recovery from recoil in timed and rapid fire. A shooter who fails to grip the pistol in this manner may still be able to engage targets accurately (since accuracy is a matter of sight alignment and trigger control), but without speed. Recoil will cause the pistol to rise or flip beyond the shooter's control, causing him to wait until the sights align with the target again.

### **Multiple planes of pressure**

4-8. Applying the proper amount and direction of pressure will help mitigate errors by keeping the pistol locked in position. A shooter's grip should provide counteracting planes of pressure to keep the pistol stable throughout trigger manipulation and recoil. The shooter should apply pressure with his hands so it reduces the movement translated into the pistol sights. Figure 4-3 shows the multiple planes of pressure used in one- and two-handed grips.

Note. Before achieving the grip, the shooter will draw the pistol. For more information about drawing the pistol, see the section entitled "Draw and Presentation" located in Chapter 6.

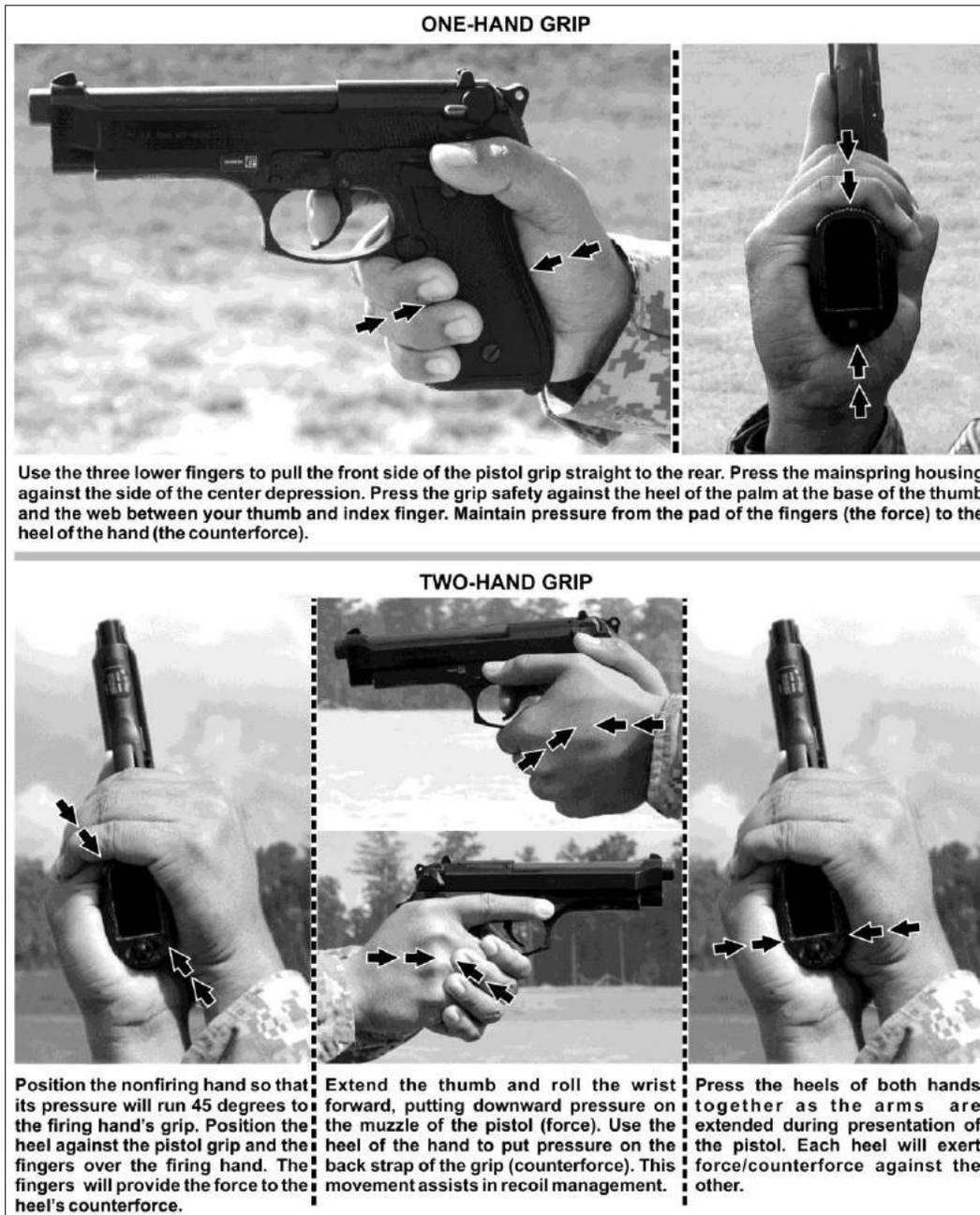


Figure 4-3. Force and counterforce in the pistol grip.

### Firmness

4-9. Shooters should grip the pistol firmly enough while firing a shot so the pistol does not shift or slip in the shooter's hands, but not so firmly the muscles of the hand and forearm begin to tremble. Shooters should use only enough force required to support the pistol and hold it firmly in the firing hand; the firmness of the firing hand simply keeps the pistol from falling to the ground. Frequent practice, experience, and certain exercises promote a strong grip and have a bearing on when a tremble will begin.

### **Comfort**

4-10. The grip must be as comfortable as possible. After the hand becomes accustomed to the added stress, the muscles of the hand and lower arm should experience no discomfort from the placement of the pistol in the hand. If the grip is awkward, the shooter should adjust the grip.

### **Relaxation**

4-11. Holding the grip too long without occasional relaxation will result in early fatigue. Fatigue destroys control.

### **Consistency**

4-12. Ideally, a shooter tries to maintain a consistent grip. In terms of grip, consistency means there are no added pressures to the pistol during firing and the shooter maintains his hand placement for each shot fired.

### **Uniformity**

4-13. Shooters should grip the pistol uniformly and in the same manner each time. The grip should not vary from one shot to the next, from one series of shots to the next, or from one day's shooting to the next. The tightness of the grip should not change, as varying the grip pressure adversely affects sight alignment. Any tightening or loosening of the grip from an established grasp can cause the sights to move out of alignment.

### **Leverage**

4-14. The force applied through the barrel or line of bore during firing, also called recoil, causes it to act as a lever in a shooter's grip. Proper leverage helps a shooter manage recoil and initiate faster follow-on shots. To manage this force, the shooter should grip the pistol high on the grip as close as possible to the line of bore (Figure 4-4). The thumb of the nonfiring hand should be parallel to the pistol frame. This lets the wrist of the nonfiring side "lock out" and keeps the pivot point of the applied force close to and high in relation to the barrel.

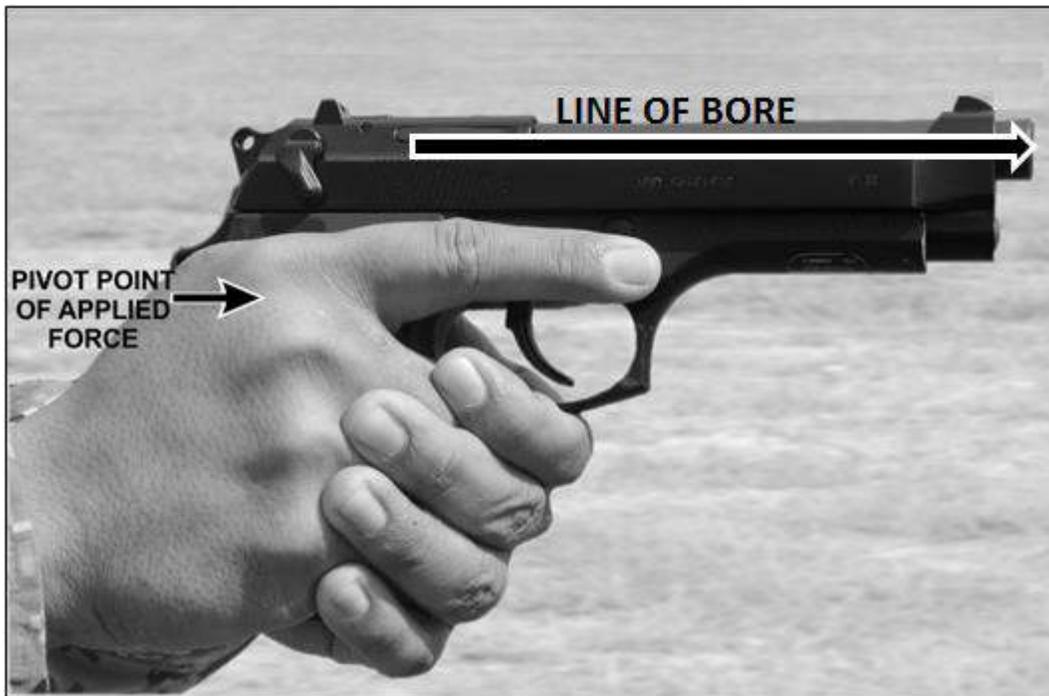


Figure 4-4. Leverage.

## COMMON GRIP ERRORS AND CORRECTIONS

4-15. Shooters can experience numerous grip errors from incorrect hand placement. Figure 4-5 shows these errors.

Note: Often, grip errors ingrained through training iterations are difficult to correct. The grip might feel correct to the shooter, even after errors are identified and corrected, causing the shooter to slip into old habits. Regular dry firing focused on correct technique will help reinforce corrections.

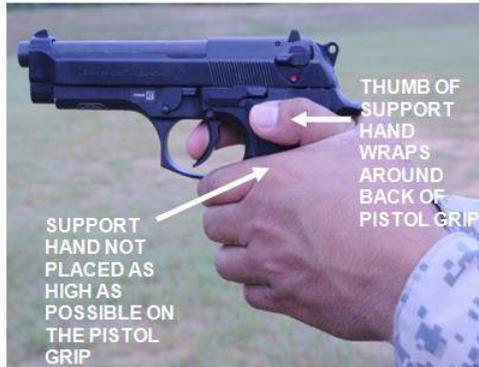
Sometimes the errors are not associated with initial hand placement, but with issues that occur upon the exertion of pressure. Table 4-1 addresses these types of errors.

**ERROR:** The thumb is pointing upward at an angle (in reference to the frame).



**CORRECTION:** Roll the thumb forward and create a 45-degree downward force to assist in recoil management.

**ERROR:** "Shallow Grip." The hand is not high enough on the dovetail notch and the thumb is too low on the pistol. This prevents proper leverage or control of the pistol during recoil.



**CORRECTION:** Grip high against the dovetail notch with the web between your thumb and your index finger.

**ERROR:** The index finger of the nonfiring hand is placed on the front of the trigger guard. The finger is likely to disturb the pistol during firing, as this finger can mimic the action of the trigger finger and pull the pistol into the finger.



**CORRECTION:** Ensure that the index finger from the nonfiring hand is positioned between the middle finger of the firing hand and the trigger guard.

**ERROR:** The thumbs are overlapped, reducing the weapon-to-individual interface, degrading performance of the fundamentals, and reducing recoil management.



**CORRECTION:** Place the nonfiring thumb alongside the firing thumb. The firing thumb should sit above the nonfiring thumb, with both parallel to the slide.

**ERROR:** "Cup and Saucer Grip." A proper firing hand grip rests upon the nonfiring hand.



**CORRECTION:** Do not perform this action.

Figure 4-5. Grip / Hand placement errors and corrections.

Table 4-1. Errors in grip pressure.

ISSUE	IDENTIFYING/CORRECTING THIS ISSUE	
<p><b>ANTICIPATING RECOIL</b></p> <p>As a Soldier begins to learn to fire his pistol, he might anticipate the recoil of the pistol. Anticipating the recoil often causes two reactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The shooter tightens his muscles during or just before the hammer falls.</li> <li>• The shooter fights the recoil by pushing the pistol downward.</li> </ul> <p>In either case, the rounds will not hit the point of aim.</p> <p><b>Note.</b> See the section titled “Trigger Control” in this chapter for more information about sympathetic tightening of the muscles of the hand.</p>	<p>Fighting recoil by pushing the pistol downward causes the wrists to “break” (that is, the shooter’s wrists bend forward, pushing the barrel downward).</p>	<p>To check for this issue, a coach can use the ball and dummy method. In this method—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The coach presents one of two pistols to a shooter: a loaded one (loaded by the coach) or an empty one.</li> <li>(2) The shooter fires the pistol presented to him.</li> <li>(3) When firing the empty pistol, the shooter can observe that, in anticipating recoil, he is forcing the pistol downward as the hammer falls.</li> </ol> <p><b>Note.</b> Repetition of the ball-and-dummy method helps reduce recoil anticipation.</p>
<p><b>HEELING</b></p> <p>Heeling involves tightening the large muscle in the heel of the hand.</p> <p>A shooter who has problems reacting correctly to recoil or trouble achieving independent trigger finger action might try to correct the fault by tightening the bottom of the hand, which results in a heeled shot.</p>	<p>When firing the pistol, this error causes the rounds to strike high on the firing hand side of the target.</p>	
<p><b>VARYING TIGHTNESS OF GRIP</b></p> <p>A shooter’s grip should not vary in tightness. Variations will cause changes in sight alignment.</p>	<p>To check for variations in tightness or correctness of grip—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Dry-fire a few shots.</li> <li>(2) Watch for slight variations in sight alignment.</li> </ol> <p>To assure the sights stay aligned, extend the firing arm and observe the sight alignment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the front and rear sights are misaligned— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Grasp the barrel with your nonfiring hand.</li> <li>— Loosen the grip sufficiently to rotate the pistol in your hand slightly away from the direction of the alignment error.</li> <li>— Grasp the pistol again firmly, and extend the arm.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Note.</b> Check alignment without trying to move the wrist or head.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the alignment is natural, try the closed eye test: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— With your arm extended, close your eyes and raise your arm.</li> <li>— Lower your arm and settle.</li> <li>— Open your eyes and observe.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If the alignment has changed, reposition the pistol in your firing hand and repeat the closed eye test until the front and rear sights naturally align and maintain their alignment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note.</b> Due to the tendency of the sights to realign themselves during shooting, check sight alignment continually. Your grip may not remain correct due to the jolting recoil and build-up of fatigue. You will have to correct your grip to maintain sight alignment.</p>	

## **POSITION**

4-16. Position involves the orientation of the body or the weapon in relation to the terrain and the target. Proper position provides a foundation for the shooting platform and forms the starting point for assuming firing positions. Figure 4-6 shows a good position and explains its elements.

## **ASPECTS OF A GOOD POSITION**

4-17. A good position should be both balanced and dynamic. Everyone has a unique combination of physical characteristics such as height, weight, proportion of the body, and muscle development, so no definite, all-purpose position applies to all shooters. Each shooter must find a position based on his body and on other requirements discussed in this section.

### **Balance**

4-18. Developing a balanced position is key to creating the maximum control needed to deliver an accurate shot. A balanced position—

- a. Provides the most stability, enabling shooters to assume and break down a position more easily.
- b. Creates the least amount of strain on the shooter's muscles. When assuming a firing position, the shooter's muscular system undergoes considerable strain to support the extended arm holding a pistol.
- c. Results in minimal movement to all parts of the system, including the body, the firing arm, and the pistol.
- d. Enables the shooter to position his head in such a way that he can efficiently use his eyes throughout the aiming process.

### **Dynamic**

4-19. A good position should be easy to assume and easy to break down. A dynamic position—

- a. Enables shooters to move to and from them easily.
- b. Is weight-forward and aggressive. This provides recoil control and eases transitions to fighting positions.
- c. Is reactive. Shooters should lower their centers of gravity to increase stability and reaction to potential external forces.

**KNEES**  
Relax your knees so that they are slightly bent (as they naturally are) to lower your center of gravity, assist in balance, and enable you to more easily assume and break down a stance.

**HEAD**  
Hold your head upright and in a natural position to provide balance and stability. Hold your head level (not tilted to the left or right or forward) to ensure balance, so that you can see the target directly in line with the arm and sights.

Bring the weapon sights to your head, so that your head moves very little or not at all.

**FEET**  
Position your feet shoulder-width apart, with your nonfiring foot slightly in front of your firing foot. This enables your feet to provide a stable platform to support shooting and recoil management. Distribute your weight between both feet. Focus your weight on the balls of your feet.



**TORSO/BODY**  
Position your torso so that it is square to the target. This allows the most frontal coverage of the body armor, enables proper positioning of the weapon as centered in the a triangle between your chest and arms, allows the body to absorb recoil, assists in recoil management, and best allows for reaction.

**ARMS**  
Extend your arms without pushing them past their natural range of motion. Do not lock your elbows.

Center your arms on your chest or hold them slightly offset on your dominant eye side, forming a triangle between your chest and arms, if viewed from above.

**Note.** An alternate technique involves rolling your elbows slightly inward without exaggerating the movement. This will place your elbows horizontal to the ground, which assists in absorbing recoil and keeps the weapon on target.

**WAIST**  
Slightly bend at your waist, with your upper torso and shoulders forward of your belt buckle.

Figure 4-6. Proper position.

## **COMMON ERRORS IN POSITION AND CORRECTIONS**

4-20. Shooters can experience numerous errors in position. Figure 4-7 and Figure 4-8 shows these errors and how to correct them.

Note: During the initial training period, shooters must carefully select a position. Correct poor positions before bad habits develop.

DRAFT

**ERROR:** This position is not aggressive enough. The feet too close together, the toes are relatively even, and weight is on the heels.



**CORRECTION:** Position your feet shoulder-width apart, with your nonfiring foot slightly in front of your firing foot. Focus your weight on the balls of your feet. Keep your weight off your heels, as this creates an imbalance that will hinder your ability to manage recoil and to assume and break down the position.

**Note.** If recoil pushed your position backward due to lack of aggressiveness, curl your toes as if you are digging them in. This will raise your heels and push your position forward.

**ERROR:** The elbows bent beneath the pistol.



**CORRECTION:** Do not bend your elbows beneath the pistol. This will create a hinge point and make recoil management more difficult, as the pistol will tend to rise uncontrollably.

**ERROR:** The position is too aggressive. Weight too far forward, causing forward balance and stability issues and compromising grip by forcing the hands apart. Too much weight placed on the firing foot, causing an imbalance in the position.



**CORRECTION:** There is too much distance between the feet. Position your feet shoulder-width apart. Distribute your weight equally on the feet.

**ERROR:** Locked elbows.



**CORRECTION:** Do not lock your elbows. Locking your elbows will negatively impact recoil absorption by transferring the energy from recoil to your shoulders, which will displace your torso.

Figure 4-7. Common position errors and corrections.

**ERROR:** The knees bent purposefully.



**CORRECTION:** Relax your knees so they bend slightly (as they naturally are). Purposefully bending the knees causes muscle fatigue in the thighs.

**ERROR:** The head dropped when bringing the pistol to the target, which limits vision and slows transitions between targets.



**CORRECTION:** Bring the pistol's sights to your head, so that your head moves very little or not at all.

Figure 4-8. Common position errors and corrections continued.

## FIRING POSITIONS

4-21. The shooter's position must provide the greatest stability possible for both his body and the pistol. An improper position will affect a shooter's ability to place fire on a given target. Assuming a proper position to allow for a steady aim is critical to survival.

### Ready position

4-22. The ready position is the start position for presentation. If a shooter draws the pistol, but does not wish to present the pistol to the target, he remains in this position. If he wishes to take his sights off the target, he returns to this position. Figure 4-9 explains how a shooter assumes the ready position.

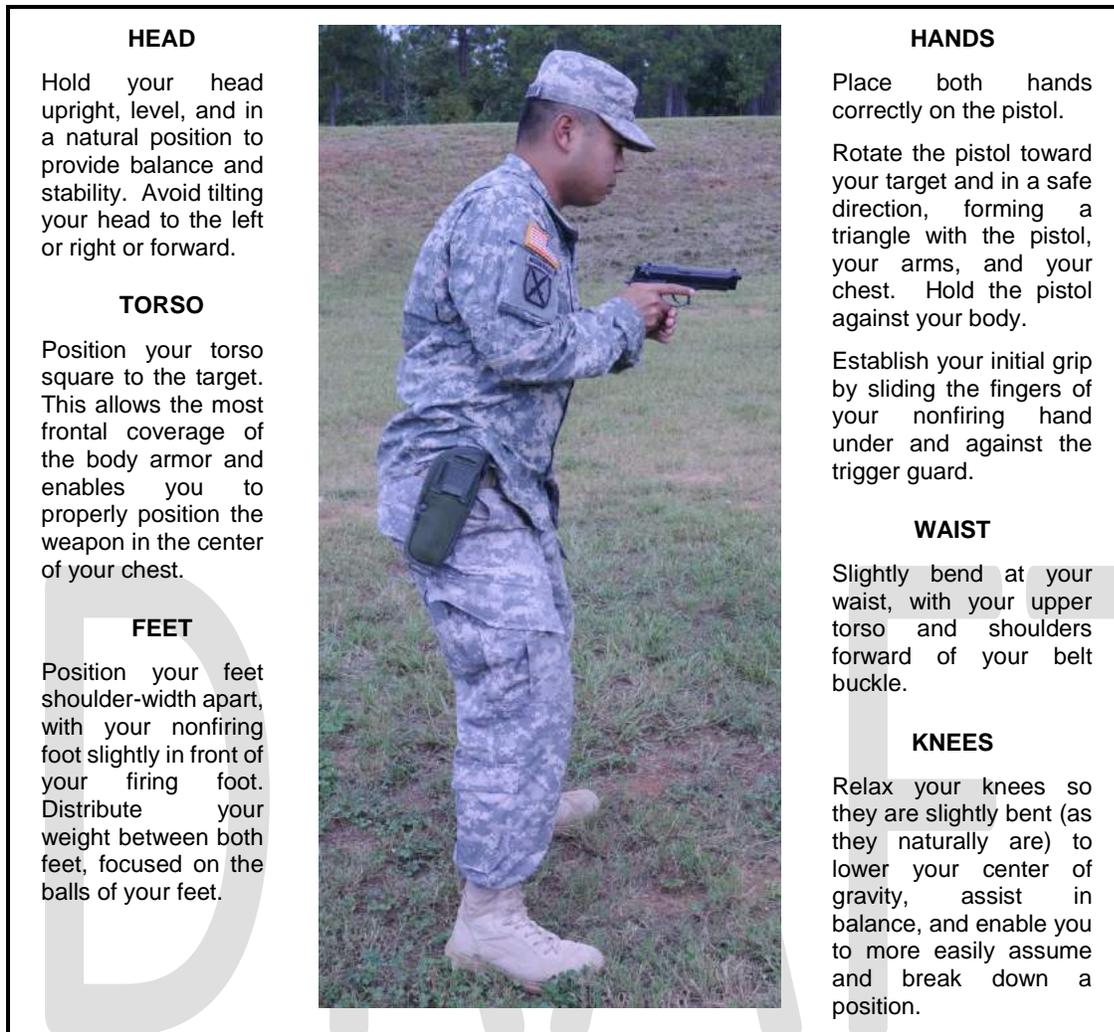


Figure 4-9. Ready position.

## ALTERNATE POSITIONS

4-23. Combat requires Soldiers to shoot from various positions. During combat, a Soldier may not have time to assume a position that allows him to establish his natural point of aim. Furthermore, firing from a covered position may require the Soldier to adapt his position to available cover. Although most pistol shooting is from a standing position, training should include others such as the prone, kneeling and shooting from behind cover or using artificial support. The following section gives examples.

4-24. Any position the shooter assumes should support sight alignment, recoil management, and should not interfere with the operation of the pistol. Soldiers should focus on assuming various positions that support these criteria, including prone (Figure 4-10), kneeling supported/unsupported (Figure 4-11), and barricade (Figure 4-12 and Figure 4-13).

### Prone

4-25. The prone position maximizes the support offered by the ground and lowers the shooter's profile to a minimum. Although the ground greatly enhances stability there are challenges specific to pistol shooting in the prone position. The pistol is often much closer to the shooter's eyes than in

other positions. This will make the sights appear different and require greater emphasis on sight alignment. The prone position can also be challenging when the shooter is wearing a lot of equipment on his chest making it difficult to get his eyes behind the pistol and achieve proper sight alignment.



Figure 4-10. Prone position.

### **Kneeling**

4-26. Figure 4-11 depicts various kneeling positions. The first, unsupported, is the quickest to acquire and move out of. It offers the advantage of having the same upper body position as the standing position leading to a good view of the sights and good recoil control. The second, supported, is similar to the traditional kneeling position used with a rifle. It offers enhanced stability compared to the unsupported position but, like the prone, often moves the sights closer to the shooter's eyes making sight alignment more difficult. The final kneeling position, both knees down, is somewhat slower to acquire and move out of than the others but offers greater lower body stability.



Figure 4-11. Various kneeling positions. Unsupported, supported, and both knees down.

### **Barricade**

4-27. The supported barricade position shown in Figure 4-12 allows the shooter to make use of cover and gain additional support while firing. The support of the barricade aides in both recoil recovery and reduction of the wobble area. Of course barricades designed specifically for shooting

are not always available. The Soldier should select a position that allows him to maximize the support given by what is available.



*Figure 4-12. Supported barricade position.*

4-28. The use of a barricade does not always imply the shooter must use it for support. Considering pistols are almost exclusively for short range engagements, the additional stability may not be necessary. The Soldier may be able to gain better cover and concealment by standing back from an obstacle. Figure 4-13 shows the use of a barricade with standoff. Note that when firing either to the left or to the right of the barricade the shooter is standing behind it and leaning to the side only enough to gain visibility of the target.



*Figure 4-13. Barricade with standoff.*

**Note:** Properly use obstacles for cover and concealment when provided.

## Chapter 5 THE SHOT PROCESS

The process of firing a shot does not begin and end with pulling the trigger. In fact, additional actions are required to ensure good pistol marksmanship. Shooters must know the fundamentals of pistol marksmanship and many additional tasks, and understand how the additional tasks fit into the shot process. The shot process is a personal mental technique for organizing the actions associated with marksmanship. It is a mental checklist shooters use as they fire.

Marksmanship involves the application of these various tasks. For example, a competitive marksman would apply his focus to position, sights, stabilization, and trigger control in succession, but would sustain these aspects throughout the process, while his attention cycles through each task.

### THE SHOT PROCESS

5-1. Table 5-1 details these actions organized into three different sections, The Pre Shot, Shot, and the Post Shot. As mentioned above there is considerable overlap of each of these steps and many must occur simultaneously.

Table 5-1. The shot process.

1.	PRE SHOT	Begin in a ready or firing position, or draw and present the pistol
2.		Obtain a good grip on the pistol.
3.		Assume a proper position.
4.		Align the sights with the target.
5.		Settle into the minimum wobble area.
6.		Maintain sight alignment and minimum wobble area.
7.	SHOT	Focus on the front sight.
8.		Start positive trigger pressure.
9.		FIRE
10.		Call the shot.
11.	POST SHOT	Follow through.
12.		Recoil recovery.
13.		Evaluate.

Chapters 3 and 4 cover the steps in Table 5-1 through firing the shot. The following apply after the shot:

#### Calling the shot

5-2. At the moment a shot breaks, the shooter should try to create a “mental snapshot” of where the sights are pointing. This will help him to predict where the round should impact. This process is “calling the shot.” Calling the shot will allow the shooter to quickly assess whether he has correctly applied the fundamentals and make minor adjustments to his technique to be more effective with follow up shots.

#### Follow through

5-3. Follow-through is the continued application of the fundamentals throughout the firing of the shot. It continues until after the shooter has recovered from recoil and is prepared to reengage the target. Proper and deliberate follow-through greatly enhances the execution of the fundamentals. Follow through includes the actions shown in Table 5-2.



Table 5-2. Follow Through.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain concentration and focus on the sights.</li><li>• Use proper trigger control.</li><li>• Reset the trigger and keep your finger in contact with the trigger.</li></ul> <p><b>Note.</b> If you remove your finger from the trigger, you must squeeze the slack from it (again) before you engage another target. This can cause you to disturb the sights. To avoid this, try to keep your finger in contact with the trigger during reset.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recover from recoil.</li><li>• Attain a secondary sight picture.</li><li>• Return to the target and assess.</li><li>• Reengage, if necessary.</li></ul> <p><b>Note.</b> Engage the threat until you destroy it. To be sure, watch the target fall to the ground, reassess the target's threat level, and reengage the target, if needed, until the target no longer poses a threat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scan the area for additional targets.</li><li>• Transition between targets, if needed, based on each target's current threat level.</li></ul>
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### **Recoil recovery**

5-4. Recoil recovery and management involves quickly regaining sight alignment and redirecting the pistol back onto the target after recoil. Good recoil management enables a shooter to reengage a target quickly, accurately, and effectively. When a pistol recoils, the muzzle will rise, and the pistol itself will push to the rear. A shooter manages these movements by using a proper grip and an aggressive, balanced position.

### **Proper grip**

5-5. To manage recoil, shooters should grip the pistol firmly and uniformly. Properly gripping the pistol using appropriate pressure helps in managing recoil and speeds recovery. If the pistol moves in the hand due to recoil the shooter must make adjustments before the next shot. This slows the entire process. Proper grip eliminates these movements allowing the shooter to fire again without adjustment.

### **Aggressive and balanced position**

5-6. A position that is weight-forward and aggressive reduces body movement due to recoil and speeds recovery. As with the grip, if the shooter allows recoil to change his position when firing multiple shots, adjustments will be necessary between shots slowing the recovery process.

### **SPEED AND ACCURACY**

5-7. Discussions of pistol shooting almost always lead to the topic of speed while shooting. This is with good reason. Pistol engagements almost always occur at short range which necessitates being able to engage a target quickly. It is the shooter's job to find a way to apply the fundamentals of aligning the weapon with the target and firing it without disturbing this alignment. Speed comes from training, being able to apply the fundamentals quickly, and realizing at close ranges perfect sight alignment and trigger control are not necessary to be effective. Figure 5-1 illustrates this concept. At the closest ranges the target appears very large. Engaging with multiple shots very

quickly is not difficult because the target is not hard to hit. As the range increases the target appears smaller; therefore, a more careful application of the fundamentals is necessary to produce effective hits. Shortcuts taken while aiming or squeezing the trigger will likely result in a miss.

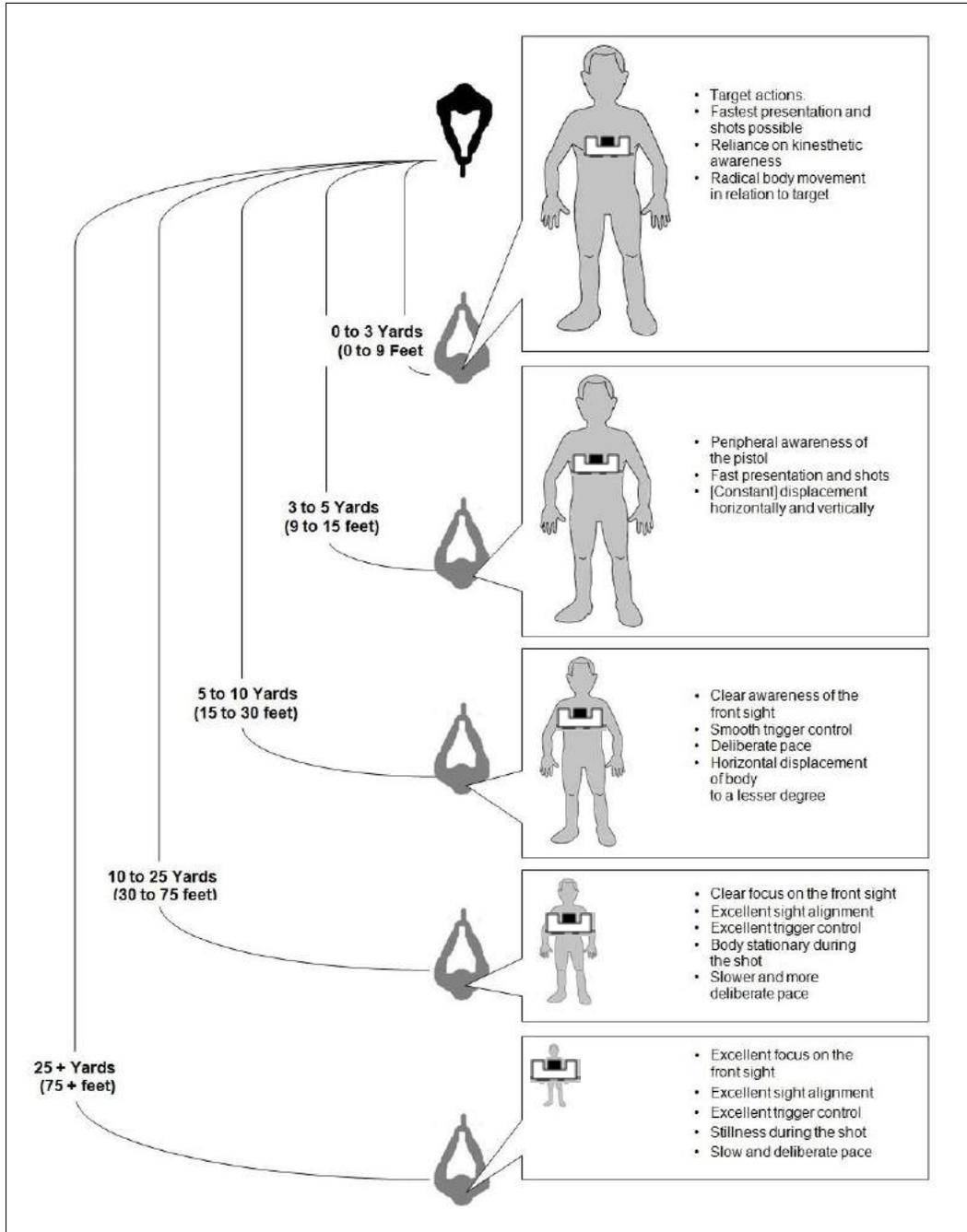


Figure 5-1. Balance between accuracy and speed as an enemy approaches a shooter.

## Chapter 6 PISTOL ENGAGEMENTS

Beyond the fundamentals of shooting, which apply under all circumstances, and the shot process, there are techniques and equipment which the Soldier must apply and use under many circumstances to be effective with a particular weapon. The pistol is no different. This chapter discusses these techniques and equipment.

### HOLSTERS

6-1. The holster is the most significant piece of equipment used with a pistol. The holster properly and consistently places the pistol on the Soldier where he has rapid, safe access to it. There are many different designs currently in use throughout the Army and each has its own benefits. The following are the main tasks a holster must perform:

- a. Maintain control of the pistol while conducting other tasks that require both hands.
- b. Allow rapid access to the pistol when necessary, especially while wearing other equipment.
- c. Retention of the pistol when in close quarters, keeping the pistol from the enemy.

### Selection of an appropriate holster

6-2. The most common place to position the holster is on the strong side of the body at the hip or on the thigh. Placing the pistol on the thigh can make access easier when wearing body armor. The Soldier should try to keep the pistol as high as possible to make movement easier. The pictures below depict various ways to wear a holster.

6-3. Always look to the above list when selecting a holster. If it does not hold the pistol securely and allow rapid access, it is not appropriate.

6-4. There are many other options for positioning a pistol on the body in various circumstances. Each of these requires careful consideration and training if used but this book does not specifically cover them.

### Lanyards

6-5. Lanyards issued with pistols and holsters provide an additional measure of retention. It is best to select a holster that provides sufficient retention that a lanyard is unnecessary as they often hinder the employment of the pistol. When required, the lanyard should be of a type and positioned in a way that it will not interfere with drawing and firing the weapon. It should also be carefully inspected so it does not get caught in the shooter's equipment or create a safety hazard.

### DRAW AND PRESENTATION

6-6. The draw is the manipulation by which a shooter removes a pistol from its holster, and presentation is the manipulation by which a shooter drives the pistol to the target. The transition between these two actions is fluid and seamless; their purpose involves removing the pistol from the holster and bringing it to bear on the target as quickly as possible. Figure 6-1 and Figure 6-2 show the process by which a shooter draws his pistol and presents it.

Note: The draw will vary based on the type of holster used. This publication does not cover all types of holsters. Soldiers should use the retention devices on the holster as



designed during training. This will give them confidence in the design and help to identify inappropriate holsters.

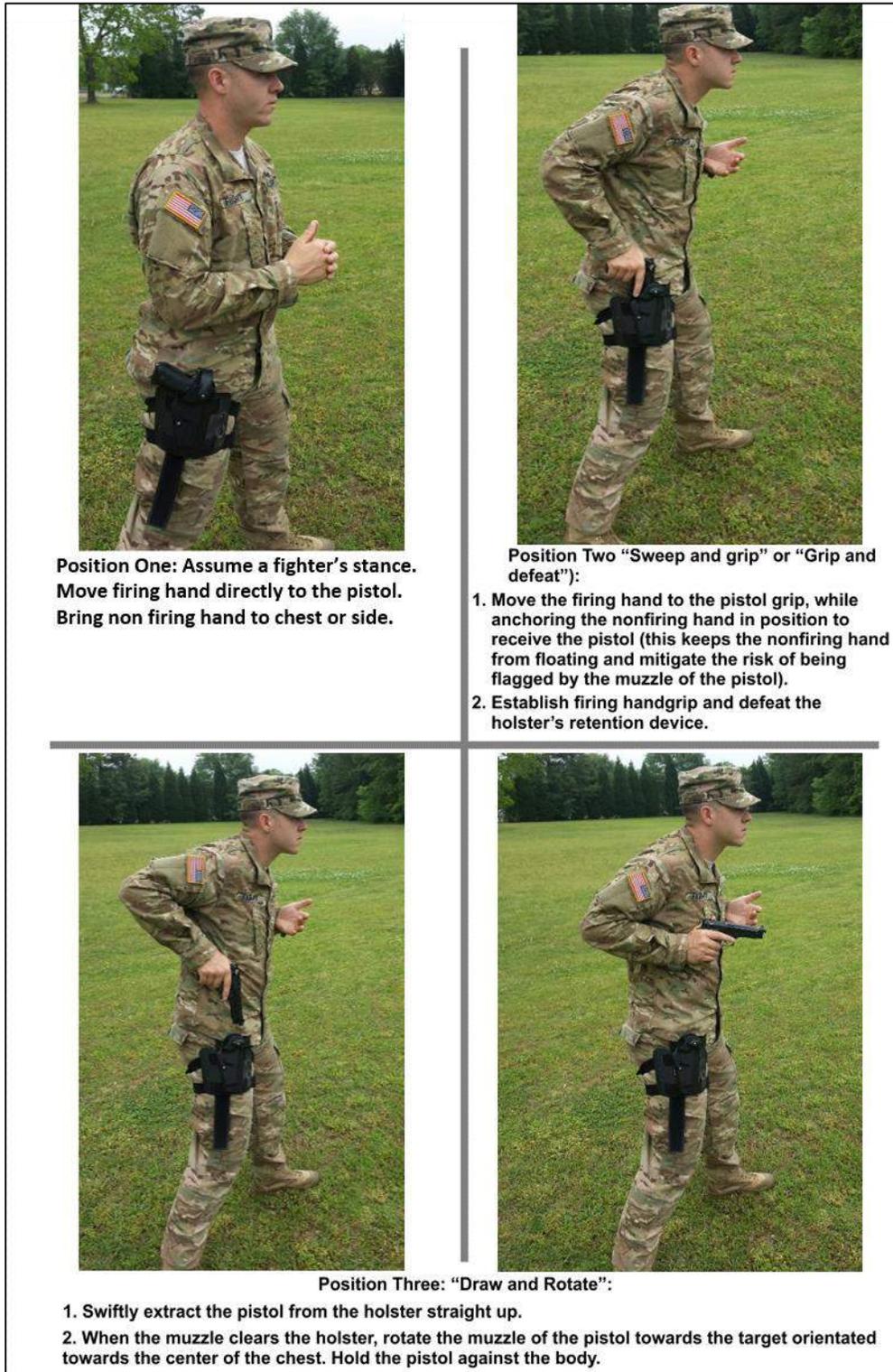


Figure 6-1. Draw and presentation of the pistol.



Both hands are placed correctly on the weapon.

The weapon is centered at the chest and pointed in a safe direction.

**Position Four "Meet and Greet":**

1. Establish initial grip by sliding the fingers of your nonfiring hand under and against the trigger guard.
2. Disengage pistol safety.

**Notes:**

1. This is the start position for weapon presentation. If the shooter drew the weapon, but does not wish to present the weapon to the target, he would remain in this position.
2. If the shooter wishes to take his sights off target, he would return to this position.



At full presentation, the shooter should have the correct grip, correct sight alignment and sight picture and should be in the correct stance.

**Position Five: "Extend and Prep":**

1. Bring the weapon up to your sight line.
2. Place the heel of your nonfiring hand against the grip between the space provided by the fingers and heel of your firing hand.

**Notes:**

1. Extend your arms driving the weapon on a straight line to the target. This movement should appear to be an exaggerated L in its upward and outward movement. Complete your grip by extending your thumbs and placing them in position. Prep the trigger.

Figure 6-2. Draw and presentation of the pistol (continued).

## Aspects of good draw and presentation

6-7. Good draw and presentation have the following aspects:

- a. Speed and efficiency
- b. Control

### Speed and efficiency

6-8. The urgency of pistol engagements necessitates speed. Pistol engagements are usually close-proximity engagements in which overmatch is lessened or nonexistent. Consider how quickly a person can move: If a shooter's draw takes 3 seconds, a person standing 20 feet away can cover that distance before the shooter orients the pistol on him and fires. Due to this urgency, execute the draw as quickly and efficiently as possible. At the same time, many pistol injuries occur during the draw; as such, execute the draw safely. Training efficient motions is the key to developing a fast draw. The shooter must acquire the correct grip with their strong hand when it first contacts the pistol. The weak hand should make contact and grip the pistol in front of the chest without a pause in the motion. Finally, bring the pistol forward level and pointed at the target. This allows the shooter to acquire his sights as quickly as possible and begin to fire as soon as the arms reach full extension. Eliminate extra motions of the hands, arms, or body and pauses in the required motions.

### Control

6-9. In an engagement, shooters must present the pistol quickly. Then, they must immediately slow down to execute the fundamentals of trigger control and sighting as appropriate for the distance at which they are shooting. This is challenging and requires mental discipline.

### Methods of disengaging the safety

6-10. An important feature of the M9 pistol is that it is not unsafe to carry the pistol with the safety / decocking lever in the up (off) position. By design, the M9 will not fire without pulling the trigger. If the Soldier chooses to carry the pistol with the safety / decocking lever down (on) the shooter can disengage the safety at various points during draw and presentation. Figure 6-3 shows methods for disengage the safety. The safety should be disengaged before the arms extend away from the body.



Figure 6-3. Methods of disengaging the safety.

**Common errors in draw and presentation**

6-11. Figure 6-4 depicts many of the common errors associated with the draw and presentation of the pistol and suggests corrections.

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**ERROR:** The pistol is brought up in the low ready, with the arms fully extended and the pistol pointing toward the ground.

**PROBLEM:** This prevents the shooter from focusing on the sights as he brings the weapon up, potentially slowing the sighting process, because the shooter has to refine his sights before firing. It also forces the shooter to wait to fire the pistol until it is fully brought to bear.



**CORRECTION:** After establishing initial grip by sliding the fingers of your nonfiring hand under and against the trigger guard and removing the pistol's safety, bring the pistol up to your sight line.

**ERROR:** The muzzle is elevated as the pistol is brought to the sight line. Extension is completed as the rear sights are brought up and the front sights are brought down.

**PROBLEM:** This prevents the shooter from focusing on the sights as he brings the weapon up, potentially slowing the sighting process, because the weapon impedes the shooter's vision. It also forces the shooter to wait to fire the pistol until it is fully brought to bear.



**CORRECTION:** Do not elevate the muzzle. Instead, keep the muzzle level with the ground.

**ERROR:** The shooter's nonfiring hand did not meet his firing hand and the pistol reaches the center of his body prior to presentation.



**CORRECTION:** After rotating the pistol toward your target, establish initial grip by sliding the fingers of your nonfiring hand under and against the trigger guard.

**ERROR:** The shooter's finger is on the trigger while it is still holstered, and he has improper firing hand grip.



**CORRECTION:** Establish proper firing hand grip, keep your finger straight and off the trigger until you are ready to fire.

Figure 6-4. Errors in draw and presentation with corrections.

## Reholstering

6-12. Once firing is completed, shooters should reholster their pistols. Prior to reholstering, shooters should decock their pistols using the decocking/safety lever. This mechanism safely returns the pistol to a safe condition. When reholstering, the shooter should ensure that his finger is off the trigger and outside the trigger guard. The shooter should not attempt to lower the hammer using his thumb. There is no time limit for reholstering; reholster without rushing. When reholstering watch the pistol go into the holster and reengage the holster's retention device.

### **DANGER**

*Shooters must decock their pistols prior to reholstering. Failure to do so could cause injury or death. The shooter should not attempt to lower the hammer using his thumb. Lowering the hammer using one's thumb can result in negligent discharge of the pistol.*

## THE WORKSPACE

6-13. The workspace, shown in Figure 6-5, is the area in front of the shooter to perform reloads and correct malfunctions. The shooter will bring the weapon closer to the body and up just below the line of sight. This is the area with the most dexterity, strength, and control. It is common to see shooters perform these actions at waist level or with their arms fully extended. This will slow down the process.



Figure 6-5. The workspace.

## RELOAD

6-14. The reloading actions described here are those used to rapidly reload the pistol during an engagement. Chapter 2 discusses the steps to administratively load and unload the M9. There are two techniques considered here, the speed reload and the tactical reload.

### Speed reload

6-15. The purpose of the speed reload, Figure 6-6, is to bring an empty pistol back to firing condition in the shortest possible time.

- a. Slide locked to the rear. The trigger finger should be straight and outside of the trigger guard.
- b. Depress the magazine release with the thumb of your firing hand. It may be necessary to rotate the pistol in the hand slightly to reach the magazine release. Keep the pistol horizontal and allow the magazine to fall freely. Simultaneously move your nonfiring hand to the magazine pouch securing a new magazine.
- c. Grasp the new magazine so the index finger rests along the front of the magazine and the base pad of the magazine rests in the palm of the hand.
- d. With the pistol in your workspace, transition your eyes from downrange to the pistol and forcefully insert the new magazine into the magazine well. Push upward with the palm of your hand to fully seat the new magazine.
- e. Release the slide. Establish a proper grip and present the pistol to the target. Reengage if necessary.

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1. Pistol empty, slide locked to the rear. Bring pistol back to the workspace. Non firing hand reaches for new magazine.



2. Bring magazine up to pistol. Index finger is along the front of the magazine. The base of the magazine is in the palm of the hand



3. Insert the magazine.



4. Seat the magazine with the palm of the hand. Ensure the magazine is fully seated. Release the slide and regrip. Present the pistol to the target.

*Figure 6-6. The speed reload.*

### **Tactical reload**

6-16. The purpose of the tactical reload is to bring the pistol back to its fully loaded status after firing one or more rounds, but with ammunition remaining in both the chamber and magazine. The tactical reload allows the shooter save the ammunition still in the partially expended magazine. The tactical reload is slower and should not be done while engaging a target. As with the speed reload, keep the trigger finger straight and outside the trigger guard for the tactical reload.

- a. Leaving the partially expended magazine in the pistol grab a new magazine from the magazine pouch.
- b. With the new magazine in hand release the partially expended one from the pistol and insert the new one.
- c. Push firmly on the base of the new magazine to fully seat it in the magazine well. Listen for the audible click. It takes considerably more force to seat a fully loaded magazine when the slide is closed.
- d. Secure the partially expended magazine, preferably not with the full ones.

## MALFUNCTIONS

6-17. For the purposes of this book a malfunction is defined as any time the pistol fails to operate as intended. The corrective actions for a malfunction fall into two main categories described below, immediate action and remedial action. Note that although these actions will fix most issues, there are problems that will render the pistol inoperable. The most obvious of these is broken parts. When this occurs, secure the pistol in the safest way possible and select another weapon.

### Immediate action

6-18. Immediate action involves quickly applying a possible correction to a malfunction without determining the actual cause. It does not involve a complete diagnosis of the malfunction or decision-making beyond recognition there is a problem simple actions can correct. As the term suggests, perform immediate action immediately and quickly, taking no more than a few seconds. Like a battle drill, conduct immediate action reflexively and without hesitation. If the shooter observes immediate action will not correct the problem, he should proceed directly to remedial action. Table 6-1 outlines the procedures for performing immediate action.

Table 6-1. Immediate Action.

<b>Note.</b> If you do not feel immediate action can correct the malfunction, perform remedial action.		
1.	Tap	Tap the bottom of the magazine. Ensure it is locked in place.
2.	Rack	Pull the slide completely to the rear and release.
3.	Bang	Reacquire the target and squeeze the trigger.

### Remedial action

6-19. Remedial action is a conscious, observed attempt to determine the cause of a malfunction and correct it using a specific set of actions. It differs from immediate action in that it requires a Soldier to consciously analyze the status of his weapon, determine the problem, and select the appropriate actions to correct it. Table 6-2 outlines the procedures for performing remedial action.

Note. Remedial action removes a Soldier from the fight for as long as it takes him to correct the malfunction and bring his weapon back into operation. Soldiers should seek cover or drop to a knee out of the line of fire when performing remedial action. Unit SOP will dictate individual and collective actions taken any time a weapon is not capable of firing.

Table 6-2. Remedial Action.

1. Identify the cause.	Observe the pistol to identify the cause of the malfunction.
2. Point the pistol downrange. Tilt the pistol upward.	Keep the pistol pointed downrange. Tilt the pistol upward to observe the position of the slide.
3. Check for ammunition.	If the slide is locked to the rear, observe the pistol to see if ammunition is present in the magazine. If no ammunition is present, reload.
4. Lock the slide to the rear. Remove the magazine. Clear the obstruction. Replace the magazine. Release the slide. Reengage, if necessary.	If something is obstructing the chamber or keeping the slide from moving fully forward, lock the slide to the rear. Forcefully remove the magazine from the pistol. Clear the obstruction. Insert a new magazine, release the slide, position the sights on target, and try to fire.

## TARGET TRANSITIONS

6-20. Target transitions are an important skill related to pistol engagements. Once a shooter successfully engages his first target, he will transition to the next target. A shooter's ability to engage targets by transitioning from one target to another effectively and efficiently will directly affect his survivability. When transitioning between targets, shooters should perform the following steps:

- a. Lead with your eyes, and then drive the sights of your pistol to where your eyes are looking.
  1. Prior to moving the pistol, look at the next target.
  2. Identify the exact spot on the next target you want to engage.

Note: If you move your eyes as you move the pistol's sights, you will most likely stop short or move past your point of aim on the target, requiring you to sacrifice time (to return the sights to the appropriate area of the target) or accuracy.

- b. Drive with the hips to move the pistol aggressively and quickly to the next target.

1. Aggressively and efficiently move the pistol to exactly where your eyes are looking by rotating your hips toward the next target. This action engages your leg muscles and allows the pistol to travel to the next target faster. Transitioning with the lower body allows the arms, shoulders, and head to remain aligned.
2. Since the pistol's sights act like an extension of your finger, they will stop exactly where your eyes are looking.

Alternate: If the transition to the next target is extreme, you can opt to break out of position to execute the transition.

1. Return to the ready position.
2. Point the toes of the foot located nearest to the new target toward the new target. This action will allow the shooter to move the pistol more efficiently to the next target.
3. Present the pistol to the new target.

6-21. Figure 6-7 and Figure 6-8 depict target transitions from both the shooter's and target's point of view. Remember in Figure 6-7 the shooter's eyes must find the new target before the rest of his body follows. Note in Figure 6-8 the rotation at the shooter's hips. His upper body has not changed when moving from the left target to the right.

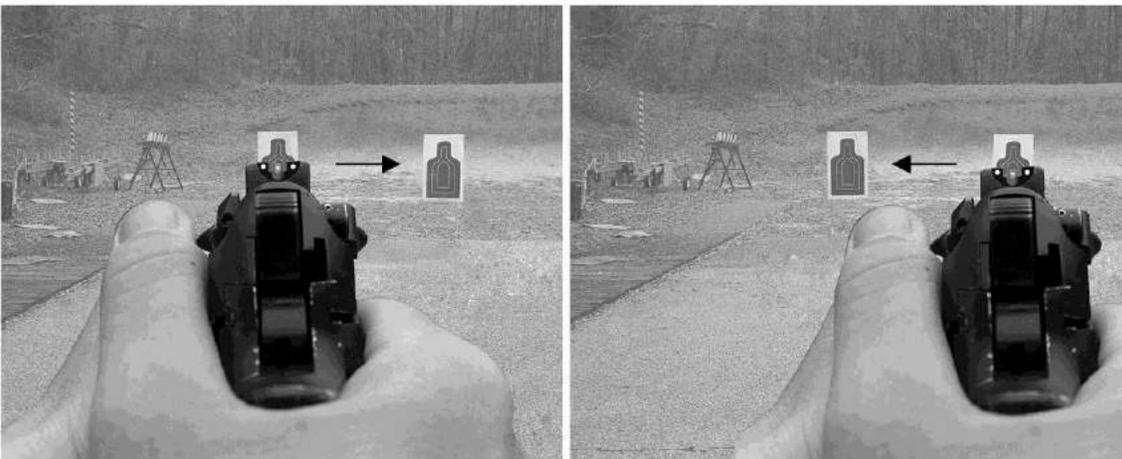


Figure 6-7. Target transitions.



*Figure 6-8. Target transitions, note the rotation at the hips.*

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## Chapter 7 AMMUNITION

Compared to the rifle, there are relatively few choices for ammunition for the M9 pistol.

7-1. **M882 Ball:** Ball round used in the M9 pistol for most training and operational purposes. The plain bullet tip identifies the M882.

7-2. **MK243 MOD 0 Hollow Point:** For use by U.S. Army Law Enforcement only.

7-3. **M1917A1 Dummy:** The M917A1 has 2 holes drilled in the side of the case. It also lacks a primer. The dummy cartridge is useful for weapons handling training (immediate action drills) and fundamentals training (ball and dummy drills).

7-4. **M1041 Marking:** Used with the Close Combat Mission Capability Kit (CCMCK), the marking cartridge requires a replacement barrel for the M9 pistol. It allows for normal weapons handling techniques in force on force training and interactive live fire scenarios.

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## Chapter 8 FREQUENTLY ASKED PISTOL MARKSMANSHIP QUESTIONS

The following frequently asked questions about pistols and pistol shooting are here to help dispel some of the myths and misconceptions about shooting and training. These are questions that occur with surprising frequency in classes and through our online question and answer forum.

**8-1. Question:** Why is pistol so hard?

**Answer:** Pistol shooting is not that hard but no one is born with the ability to shoot great. Some techniques are different than rifle shooting. With the rifle, shooters use various types of support and the bone support of their body through the use of proper positions to keep motion to a minimum. The shooter holds a rifle at three different points, the butt, the pistol grip, and the hand guard. Because a pistol held only by the hands on the pistol's grip and generally fired from the standing position, the shooter is supporting the weapon with muscles only. Groups fired with a pistol will generally not be as tight as those fired with a rifle.

If you get results that are unexpectedly poor go back and review the fundamentals. Were the sights aligned and on target when the shot was fired? Did the act of pulling the trigger disturb that alignment? These two steps will get hits on target!

**8-2. Question:** What should I expect?

**Answer:** With proper training, Soldiers should be able to keep all their shots on an E type target at 25 meters. Most should be able to do much better.

**8-3. Question:** How much does the bullet drop at 50 meters?

**Answer:** If the pistol were shooting to exactly the point of aim at 25 meters the bullet would be about an inch low at 50 meters. In other words, bullet drop due to gravity is not a major concern. If, however, the pistol is not shooting to the point of aim at close range these errors will grow as range increases. For example if the pistol is shooting 1 inch left at 10 meters it will shoot 2 inches left at 20 meters and 5 inches left at 50 meters.

**8-4. Question:** How to adjust the M9 zero?

**Answer:** The sights of the M9 are not adjustable by the operator. At 25 meters most M9s will shoot to within a few inches of the point of aim. Errors in sight alignment and trigger control are the usual cause for wildly misplaced shots. This does not imply the Soldier should not check the sights. Make sure the rear sight is centered and not loose or moving back and forth on the slide. If this happens, the pistol is unserviceable and requires repair.

**8-5. Question:** The double action shot is wasted! Should I thumb cock the pistol?

**Answer:** Not usually. With training, the double action shot should be nearly as accurate as a single action shot and much faster. Thumb cocking the hammer requires the shooter to move their hands out of the normal position during the presentation of the pistol slowing the process. The key to



shooting accurately double action is to maintain sight alignment through the entire trigger squeeze. Ensure the trigger is pulled smoothly and continuously without a series of starts and stops.

**8-6. Question:** Where should the trigger finger be?

**Answer:** The trigger finger should lay naturally across the trigger. It must be able to pull the trigger straight to the rear without pushing or pulling to one side or the other. No two shooters are exactly the same; therefore, trigger finger placement will not be the same for each shooter. Using only the tip or first joint will not work for everyone. Shooters should also keep in mind the placement may change from double action to single action. See the trigger control section of Chapter 3 for more details.

**8-7. Question:** What should I do to improve?

**Answer:** Dry fire. Practice moving to and from positions. Rehearse scenarios. Pistol shooting is just like anything else, good training improves performance. Dry fire will do a lot to improve your actual marksmanship skills. One often overlooked aspect of dry fire training is to watch the sights closely when firing the shot. If the sight alignment does not remain perfect, work to improve your trigger control or grip so the sights stay aligned. Make the most of the training time and resources you have available. When on the range not actively shooting for record, focus on drills that improve fundamentals, not simply expending ammunition.

**8-8. Question:** How do I get fast?

**Answer:** As in the previous question, quality practice. Skills such as the draw and reloads are perfect examples. Dry fire training is free. The key to improving is making sure the motions used are correct and efficient. Practice slowly, speed will come with the elimination of mistakes and unnecessary motions. Practice the correct techniques, always. Just like safety, many weapons handling and manipulation skills will become ingrained much faster if they are done correctly, not just on the range, but whenever the pistol is not securely locked in the arms room. Watch and coach other shooters when conducting training exercises. A second set of eyes can often point out mistakes and extra motions the shooter is not aware of.

**8-9. Question:** The pistol must be soaked in oil to work properly or the M9 does not need oil. Just how much oil is necessary?

**Answer:** The M9 does need oil to function properly. Chapter 2 of this book goes into more detail. It does not need oil on parts that don't move or come into contact with each other. Oil also functions to protect steel parts from rust. When cleaning it is necessary to place a light coat of oil on the parts made of steel. Oiling the aluminum frame or the plastic grips for corrosion protection is unnecessary.

**8-10. Question:** 60/40 or 30/70 grip? Grip pressure?

**Answer:** It is very difficult, even for experienced shooters, to specify exactly how much pressure each hand applies. Make sure the non-firing hand is involved and maintains solid contact with the pistol during recoil. Squeezing with the non-firing hand actually helps the firing hand grip the pistol. Find a balance. Held too tightly the pistol will begin to shake and the shooter will lose dexterity of

the trigger finger. This does not help accuracy. If the shooter holds the pistol too loosely the shooter will have very poor recoil control, slow recovery, and will not be able to manipulate the trigger without moving the pistol. As previously stated, watch and coach other shooters while they are firing. If the nonfiring hand does not maintain contact with the pistol during recoil, it is not gripping tightly enough.



This Supplemental is intended to expound upon the information found in TC 3-22.35. The information has been provided by United States Army Marksmanship Unit and has been approved for release by United States Army Infantry School within the Maneuver Center of Excellence.

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