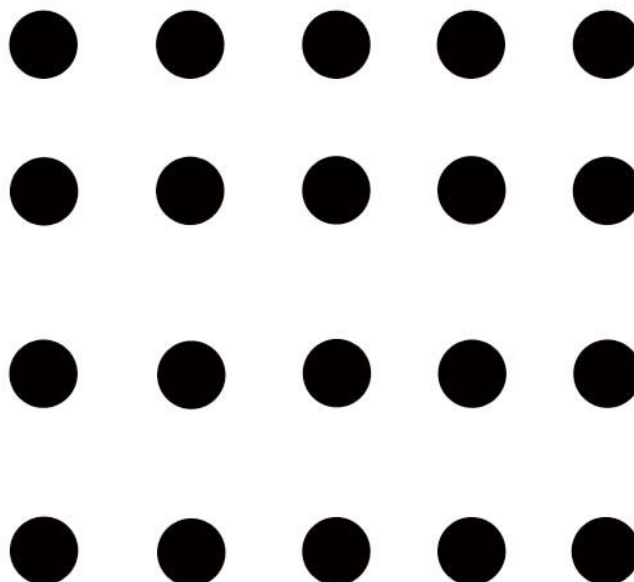


SNIPER'S HIDE ONLINE TRAINING –LESSON 7

DOT DRILLS – FRANK GALLI



Sniper's Hide Online Training Dot Drill



These lessons are not intended to replace quality instruction from a competent instructor in a formal setting. There are too many small items that need to be addressed in order for this to be done correctly and without thought. Being able to accomplish the correct shooting form without thought absolutely requires perfect practice over and over until the correct neural pathways have been established. Muscle memory does not come overnight and if it is done incorrectly time and time again, you will revert back to the incorrect form under stress.

Someone once stated: "Amateurs practice until they do it right, but professionals practice until they cannot do it wrong". Simply put, everyone needs perfect practice.

Sniper's Hide Dot Drill

As has been stated many times, we feel shooting a group is a lesson in futility for the tactical shooter. The goal is, and should be about that one round on target. There are many disciplines that focus on aggregate scores or group shooting for points. Here the point is to make each and every shot count.

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Cold Bore Shot

Another frequently asked question we see on Sniper's Hide is about the Cold Bore shot or better the cold bore deviation. It's most people's understanding that the cold bore deviation is about the rifle heating up, and the barrel needing to reach a specific temperature in order to put the remaining rounds fired into place. Well looking at this objectively, that makes very little sense since the barrel is constantly heating based on the number of rounds fired and if this sort of thinking held true the rounds would actually walk in a line and not simply throw one round out, followed up by the others falling perfectly into place. What we have found is, that first shot is more a Cold Mind Shot or what can be described as a first round flinch. I know, how does someone flinch so consistently, well it's simple we have built a series of neural pathways in our mind and we are executing the instructions based on those pathways. So, understanding how the mind operates we see it's not that hard to imagine we are executing the same mistake over and over the same way. It's a matter of personal excitement; none of us can wait to put that first round down range. Also it's a learned reaction, we have taught ourselves over the years with much reinforcement that the first round will deviate so we let it. This goes to mindset, and overcoming it is simply mind over matter.

Combating that Cold Bore Deviation

Now, before I start, there are some qualifiers as we have tested this extensively over the last year, and our testing has found a few things. The first thing is, combating the Cold Bore Shot works in 9 out of 10 people, there is always that one person that continues to have some deviation, however everyone who works towards this end, experiences some reduction in the size of the deviation. Second, there are some rifles for what ever reason, will deviate regardless, however these tend to walk putting the rounds in a pretty tight straight line to the target. I haven't found anyone able to 100% diagnose the problem, but we do see it. However, the key is almost always putting the thought out of your head. Which is why we have taken to calling the Cold Bore shot the "Cherry Popper" in order to demonstrate its more a mindset than a physical characteristic of the rifle.

The Cherry popper as found on the Sniper's Hide Dot Drill target is the lower center target, labeled "Cherry Popper" for those who want to practicing shooting and recording their first round hits on target, this is the dot to use. As well, we highly recommend shooting 2 rounds at this target. The first shot of the day, follow up by a second round to confirm or correct our first.

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So, how do we inoculate ourselves to this first round deviation? Easy, its called the dry fire. And the more dry firing you do prior to that first round the better off you are. In the image above we have Jim here at one of our last Precision Rifle 1 & 2 courses. As you can see he has a single hole in the $\frac{3}{4}$ " paste at the top of the target. Now, what the unaware don't know is, that is 2 rounds. His first shot, and his second shot follow up. It's not enough to say, hey we put our first round in the target so let's move on, heck no, that could be luck, so we want to include our second shot follow up shot. So what we have here, is given time and opportunity we want to, check our natural point of aim on the target, then dry fire, and not just once to fine tune that natural point of aim, but as many times as possible. Perfect practice before going live will not only inoculate your mind from that cold bore flinch, but also better prepare you for that all important first and what might possibly be your only round.

Finally to further qualify this line of thinking, this method while viable will not necessarily hold true for a Cold Clean Bore shot, the optimal word here is "clean". What happens in cleaning is, we remove things like carbon and copper that has filled in tiny imperfections in the bore that help with accuracy. Cleaning the barrel and removing these elements will more than likely cause a shift in your first few rounds until the rounds going downrange fill these imperfections back in. So, tip of the day here, if you are shooting a match or using this rifle for work, we recommend leaving the rifle fouled a bit prior to its use. And it doesn't have to be anything crazy. You can easily clean the rifle as much as makes you comfortable and then simply fire 3 rounds to foul it before putting it up. 3 rounds aren't going to hurt it any and you can start with a clean mental image if you find this to be point of contention.

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Drills on Paper

So where do we begin. The best way to move forward after engaging in the endless Dry Firing I know you all are doing is at 100 yards with the Sniper's Hide Dot Target.

Now that we are all straight behind the rifles, we have adjusted our scopes, and we are practicing that 90-degree trigger manipulation we'll see that our scopes and rifles may no longer be zeroed from where we started before the Online Training instruction. So what we have here is the "Check Zero Start" position. This is so we can fine-tune our rifles zero before engaging the Dot Drills. So if you wrenched on your rifle, moved it all over you may want to start with a clean Shoot N C target to get yourself on paper and ready to roll. Once you have your zero established using the proper fundamentals you can head over to the Dot Drill.

Line 1 – Top Line 5 Dots

Okay starting with line 1 we want to engage these 5 targets across the top with one round each. Now, here is the key, take each round as its own. If you blow a shot, stop, dry fire about 5 times fixing your mistakes, then head to the next one. There is no time limit, so take your time and don't think about anything other than the shot you are currently taking. Don't attempt to run to the bolt too fast, you'll only sacrifice the shot you are currently taking. Follow through and no matter way focus on the fundamentals and your sight picture. Don't let your mind drift, because it is when our mind drifts that we find we'll push a bad shot.

Pushing a bad shot means, the shooter knows the shot is off target before the trigger breaks, yet they fire regardless. When approached in an objective manner, most people will tell you they blew the shot before the trigger broke. They see the shot is off and instead of stopping and resetting they push it hoping for a positive outcome. Well the only way to guarantee a positive outcome is to see the shot, and only then breaking it when everything is right. Maintaining the focus on the sight picture, you can see if your trigger pull is drifting your sights off target. Maintain the focus on the target and let your finger do its job independent of the rest. This is why we dry practice, to build the correct neural pathway so we don't have to think about the trigger we only have to watch the sight picture.

Line 2 – Second Line 5 Dots

Once you have completed the first line you have some choices here, you can move forward, or you can take a little break, heck you can take a long break. But I recommend you at least stand up and relax. Don't over think the problem, just enjoy the time behind the rifle. Remember, successful employment of the precision rifle is more about thinking than it is about pulling the trigger. So, don't think yourself into a hole.

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Once you're ready to start, you have to prepare yourself for this next drill. Loading 5 rounds you're going to put 1 round in each dot in 30 seconds. That's right one round in each dot in 30 seconds. Use a stopwatch, PACT Timer with a 30 second par, or have your friend there time you, but this is a timed drill. The goal here in the beginning is to use all the time allotted. What we want to accomplish is making sure we have the proper position and we can acquire the target successfully engaging each round in a smooth steady fashion. As you progress you can decrease the time, but to start, we want slow and smooth.

Warning what we see a lot here is a perfectly straight line with every round hitting ½" low right off the target. This is not the rifle, this is the shooter.*

Line 3 – Third Line Down 5 Dots

Alright we gotten through the first two lines and we have yet to shoot a group and we are taking each round as its own so its time to move to Line 3 on the target. What you need to do here is stand up and take a short break. Get a drink and relax. After that is finished, you need to load 5 rounds, and with the bolt open you can either insert your magazine or top load the five rounds. Once that is accomplished point the rifle at the target then stand up. That's right stand up. How this drill works is, from the standing position you have 20 seconds to drop down and put 1 round on the first dot. So we get this clear, you'll stand up, then on the clock you'll drop down, close the bolt and fire one round on the first dot in 20 seconds. Once that round is complete you'll open the bolt and stand up again.

Second dot you are going to do the same thing but you are going to do this in 18 seconds. From the standing position you will drop down, close the bolt and fire 1 round on the second dot in less than 18 seconds. Once complete open the bolt and stand up.

Third dot you're going to do the same thing but in 15 seconds. From the standing position you will drop down, close the bolt and fire 1 round on the second dot in less than 15 seconds. Once complete open the bolt and stand up.

Fourth dot you're going to do the same thing but in 12 seconds. From the standing position you will drop down, close the bolt and fire 1 round on the second dot in less than 12 seconds. Once complete open the bolt and stand up. I think you can start to see our pattern here.

Fifth dot, you're going to do the same thing but in 10 seconds. From the standing position you will drop down, close the bolt and fire 1 round on the second dot in less than 10 seconds. Once complete open the bolt and stand up.

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These times are more than generous and if you find them too easy, simply reduce the time until the last dot is being engaged in about 6 seconds.

Last Line – 5 Dots

This last line is for an advanced version of this drill where the shooter starts from the standing position with his rifle in his hand. On the clock he will drop down to the prone with his rifle and acquire the target sending one round on each dot. The time is up to the shooter, but I recommend starting at 30 seconds and moving in 5-second increments lower and lower. These are core drills at Rifles Only and help set the stage for a lot of the drills that follow. For the online training section, these are excellent because they don't require a range with more than 100 yards and they can be used in place of shooting groups. Something we only recommend for those doing load development or for zeroing your scope.

Lastly, you can see I included an ending Zero Check. Unfortunately some equipment is not as robust as we'd hope they would be, so for peace of mind it's fine to double check our zeros before putting the rifle up. We see a lot of consistent trigger issues where the shooter swears something is off because they hit consistently off target in the same place. So to put this rest I've included the ending zero check.

As you move forward with your precision rifle training it's important to establish the proper mindset, especially during training. Too often people take a lackadaisical approach to training, which builds faulty neural pathways ingraining us with bad habits. We see them all the time on the ranges across the world. They wonder why their shooting hits a plateau, and they never seem to reach their full potential. Well mindset is the reason why. Take each shot especially during Dry Fire as if your life or the life of a family member depended on it. Perfect practice builds a proper neural pathway that is the goal, developing the proper muscle memory.

In the accompanying lesson Jacob will talk about mindset, but I also want to stress this. Be objective in your training and self-evaluation, and don't go looking for excuses as to why the shot didn't go where you wanted it to. See the shot in your mind before the trigger even breaks and through your sight picture don't waver through the entire shot. Don't just call it see it, and no matter what don't push a bad shot as it creates the wrong pathway. Validate your dry practice with live fire and trust in your practice to put the rounds on target.