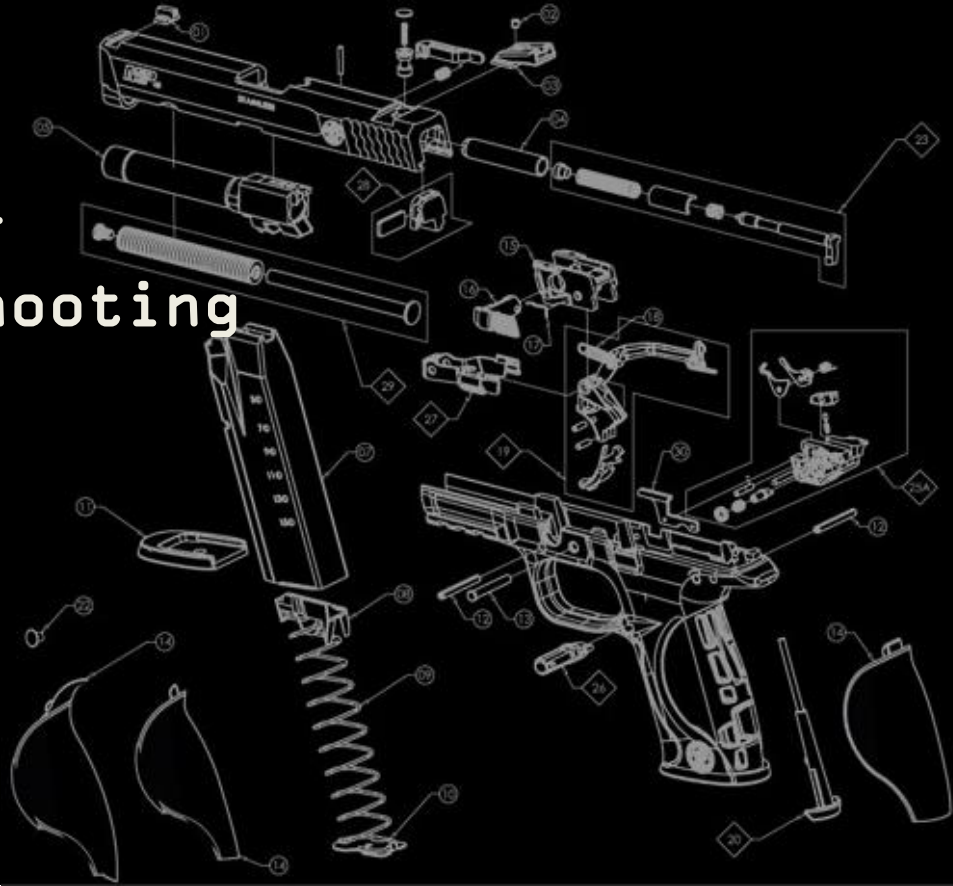




# Basics of Pistol Shooting



# INSTRUCTOR LED TRAINING

LESSON PLAN APPENDIX

&

SHOOTING QUALIFICATIONS





# INTRODUCTION

The NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course introduces students to the **knowledge, skills** and **attitude** necessary for owning and using a pistol safely. Through this course, the students will learn about pistol parts and operation, ammunition, gun safety, pistol shooting fundamentals, and pistol shooting activities. The Basic Pistol Course will also help prepare the student for participation in other NRA courses.

In order to uphold the NRA's adherence to safety, and to maintain standardization among all NRA courses, adhere to the following guidelines when conducting the NRA Basic Pistol Course.

## Course Outline and Lesson Plans

The key to conducting a successful Basic Pistol Shooting Course is to be well organized and know the subject. The course outline and lesson plans are designed to help you in these areas so that you can spend your time teaching, not trying to figure out what to teach. This course outline identifies the:

- Course goal
- Length of course
- Student text
- Course lessons

To maintain national standards for this program, the NRA has developed lesson plans for you. Each lesson plan provides the:

- Lesson title
- Learning objectives
- Estimated length of lesson
- Recommended training aids
- Lesson references
- Lesson content outline
- Instructional notes
- Key to training aid or text references

Combined with the information found in the *NRA Trainer's Guide* ("Planning and Conducting Your NRA Course"), the material presented in this course outline will put you on the road to success. The learning objectives are your road map--use them.

## Course Length and Time Requirements

The course length of the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course is based on the estimated length of each lesson indicated in the lesson plans. The actual course length may vary from this figure, as the time required for each lesson will vary because of class size, facilities, instructor experience, student experience and comprehension level, student-to-instructor ratio, weather, and unforeseen circumstances.

This course has been designed to allow for maximum flexibility in scheduling. It may be conducted a few hours at a time over several days or it may be conducted as a one-day course.

Instructors teaching this course for the first time, those mentoring new instructors, or those who do not have the support of an experienced instructor team should factor in additional time. It is better to plan a longer course and finish early than to run overtime or cut a lesson short. With experience gained by teaching from these lesson plans, you will soon be able to plan an entire course accurately and adhere strictly to your schedule.

## The Course Is Based on Objectives

This course is objective based. *The instructor must ensure students have met the learning objectives before successfully completing the course.* This may take more or less time than indicated in the lesson plans. All of the objectives are stated in terms of student performance, i.e., what the students will be able to do at the conclusion of the lesson. Explanations and demonstrations provided by the instructors are not to be confused with meeting a learning objective. The students must be able to perform each objective. To track your students' performance through the course, the instructor needs to use the Performance Requirements Checklist, located in Appendix 4. Instructors are authorized to make photocopies of Appendix 4 as needed.

Courses may be conducted for one specific pistol platform. (Semi-automatic or Revolver) In this instance the platform used must be listed on the completion certificate.

Each instructor must review and acknowledge a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the "roles and responsibilities" of being an NRA Instructor prior to conducting the NRA Basics of Pistol Shooting Course.

**Instructors should provide a signed copy of the Performance Requirements Checklist to the student and keep a copy for their own records.**

## Total Participant Involvement

The key to a successful and positive training experience is total participant involvement (TPI). *People learn by doing!* Use questions, discussions, demonstrations, group interaction, and practical exercises to their maximum potential. Minimize lectures. Remember, telling is *not* synonymous with teaching.

## Student-to-Instructor Ratio

During the range exercises for the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course, a one-to-one student-to-instructor ratio on the firing line is encouraged whenever possible. If this is not possible, the ratio on the firing line should not exceed two shooters for every NRA Certified Pistol Instructor.

Whenever possible, the coach/pupil method should be used, with one student coaching the shooter on the line through the proper technique. This promotes student learning, and also provides an extra pair of eyes on the shooting line for greater safety.

Additionally, it is recommended that a range safety officer oversee the safety of the entire line. The range safety officer's responsibility is to ensure safety, not to give individual instruction.

Depending upon the range facilities used and the number of instructors available, it may be advantageous to split the class into two or more separate groups or to use two relays for the range sessions.

## Emphasize Firearm Safety

During every lesson, constantly emphasize in words and by your own actions that a gun must always be kept pointed in a safe direction. Be certain that students observe this rule at all times, especially when students handle guns, as in dry-fire, live-fire and gun cleaning exercises. Safety must be your foremost concern; therefore, you must personally observe all of the gun safety rules at all times, and monitor your students carefully to ensure that they are also observing these rules.

Whenever you pick up a pistol, either for demonstration purposes or to hand it to a student, always be sure to keep it pointed in a safe direction, keep your finger off the trigger, remove the magazine (if any), open the action, and visually and physically check the chamber(s) to be sure that no live round remains in the gun. Use each such occasion as an opportunity to reinforce your students' gun safety training by having a student verify the unloaded condition of the pistol. Be sure that each student also performs this sequence of steps each time he or she picks up a pistol. Ensure that the student observes all of the safe gun handling rules (such as "**ALWAYS keep the gun pointed in a safe direction**") while he or she inspects the chamber(s) to verify that the pistol is empty.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** All training aids to be used as representation of a firearm (e.g.: Blue guns, Laser training devices, Air Soft, Air guns, toy guns, etc.), **MUST** be treated in the same fashion and with the same safety rules as firearms **AT ALL TIMES**. Infractions against this rule will be treated exactly the same as infractions using firearms in the same manner.

## Terminology

Do not use the term “weapon” in this course. “Weapon” has a negative connotation. Use “pistol,” “revolver,” “gun,” “firearm,” specific model, etc.

## Establish Emergency Procedures

Establish emergency procedures to be followed in the event of an accident. All course staff should be aware of these procedures and maintain a list of emergency telephone numbers.

## No Live Ammunition in the Classroom

No live ammunition is permitted in the classroom. In a training environment where handling and dry firing is necessary, it is imperative that no loaded firearms be present. If ammunition is not in the room, it cannot possibly get into a firearm! This protects instructors from potential liability and protects the students as well. Only dummy ammunition that is visually distinct from live ammunition is allowed in the classroom. Live ammunition may only be present on the range during live-fire exercises.

## Demonstrations on the Range

If you have difficulty scheduling range time, or must maximize the amount of shooting and minimize dry practice while on the range, then you may want to conduct all of the dry-firing drills contained in Lessons III and IV in a classroom setting before proceeding to the range. **NOTE: The benchrest exercise in Lesson III may be conducted in the classroom using firearm simulators with a resetting trigger, sights and a laser indicating shot placement.**

## Pregnant Women and Nursing Mothers

Pregnant women are encouraged to discuss their participation in this course with their physicians prior to the first lesson. They should discuss the effects of exposure to loud sounds and (if using an indoor range) airborne lead particulate. If any students are pregnant or nursing an infant, *they should not handle any chemicals, lubricants, or solvents* unless they have discussed doing so with their physician.

## Physical Limitations and Disabilities

Some students will not be able to assume certain shooting positions (i.e., standing shooting positions) because of physical limitations or disabilities. The presence of a physical disability does not by itself affect a student’s eligibility to attend the course or receive a completion certificate. Where necessary, adapt the exercise to work within each student’s range of ability. For example, students in wheelchairs may substitute a sitting unsupported shooting position for the standing positions taught in this course.

Students who are in wheelchairs, use prosthetic devices, or with amputations may need gun handling skills and techniques adapted in ways that are not covered in this lesson plan or the student handbook. An excellent resource for assistance and advice when working with shooters with disabilities is the national manager of the NRA Adaptive Shooting Program. Call National Manager, Adaptive Shooting Programs, Education and Training Division, National Rifle Association of America, (703) 267-1491, for further information and assistance. Regardless of ability, all students must demonstrate the necessary **knowledge, skills, and attitude** to receive a course completion certificate. Also, safety must not be compromised in any technique modified for a person with a disability.

## **Release, Waiver, Indemnification, Hold Harmless, and Assumption of Risk Agreement**

A sample Release, Waiver, Indemnification, Hold Harmless, and Assumption of Risk Agreement is included in the NRA Trainer's Guide. You or your club may want to develop a similar agreement for use with your shooting activities.

Please note that the legal issues that may be raised in an attempt to enforce such an agreement involve the interpretation of contract and tort law, both of which are governed by state (not federal) law. Tort and contract law varies from state to state and this form agreement may be enforceable in some jurisdictions and not in others. You will have to tailor this agreement to comport with the law of the state in which you intend to use it. You are strongly urged to obtain the advice of an attorney licensed to practice law in your state to advise you of the specific applicable state statutory and common law as they relate to tort and contract law, and in particular how to ensure the enforceability of release and waiver and hold harmless and indemnification agreements in your jurisdiction.

The form agreement was not drafted by an attorney licensed to practice law in your state, nor was it drafted to comport with and to withstand the scrutiny of the particular laws in your state. The agreement is therefore not to be considered as a restatement of law, nor is it to be relied upon to protect you. You must have an attorney, who is licensed to practice law in your state, review said form, if you intend to make any use of it.

Please note that the agreement is intended to be executed by adult individuals, not minors. Even if otherwise effective, it will not be effective if executed by or on behalf of a minor.

## **NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Examination and Answer Key**

The student exam and answer key are found after logging in at [NRainstructors.org](http://NRainstructors.org) under the "**Lesson Plans/PowerPoints**" section. The exam will also be available in the student packets. Use the exam as a teaching tool. The minimum passing score for the student exam is 90 percent and each student will have a maximum of five attempts to achieve a passing score. .

## **Qualification Course of Fire**

**Students must qualify shooting a course of fire consisting of four five shot groups within a 4 inch circle. Groups do not have to be consecutive. Students must qualify at the Level 1: Red level to earn a Basic Pistol Course Completion certificate. Once the student accomplishes the Level 1: Red level, instructors are encouraged to offer them the opportunity to qualify for the Level 2: White, Level 3: Blue, and Instructor level endorsements on their certificates.**

- Qualification for **Level 1: Red** is four five shot groups within the four-inch circle at 10 feet.
- Qualification for **Level 2: White** is four five shot groups within the four-inch circle at 15 feet.
- Qualification for **Level 3: Blue** is four five shot groups within the four-inch circle at 20 feet.

*Note-* Groups can be cumulative and do not need to be shot consecutively

### **Instructor Level Qualification (Level 4)**

Instructors can also take this opportunity to allow the students the opportunity to shoot to the same qualification standard that an NRA Certified Instructor must shoot. For Level 4, use the NRA Instructor Training Qualification Target. Have the student shoot 20 shots from 45 feet. If they are able to place 16 of the 20 shots within a six inch group, the student would earn the level 4 endorsement. Each endorsement is something they would be proud to share with their friends and family.

## **Targets**

Use targets with no bullseyes for the first shooting exercises. Blank targets (such as typing paper or the back of a standard target) allow beginning shooters to concentrate upon sight alignment and trigger control without the distraction of a bullseye. Sample qualification targets are available at the end of this lesson plan. Instructors may make as many copies as needed, however print a test page for each level to ensure they have printed to the proper target measurements. If not, you may have to enable your printer to print outside of the margins. If you're unable to print the targets to the proper size, create your own targets to meet the standard.

## **NRA Pistol Marksmanship Qualification Program**

Be sure to explain the NRA Pistol Marksmanship Qualification program. This program is designed to support the course content and will help the students get started in a shooting program. Emphasize that it is a fun and challenging way for students to demonstrate the skills they have acquired in the Basic Pistol Shooting Course, and also serves as an incentive to further enhance those skills.



***Thank you for your dedication to upholding  
the standards of the NRA training programs.  
Good luck with your course!***

We thank you for your commitment to firearm education and for participating in the training programs of the National Rifle Association. Your expertise and dedication will help train a new generation of shooters to exercise their freedoms safely and responsibly. If you have any questions about the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course, please contact your training counselor.

To join NRA today, or for additional information about membership, call 1-800-NRA-3888. Your membership dues can be charged to Visa, MasterCard, American Express, or Discover.



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*This manual is under no circumstances to be viewed as a restatement of the law in any jurisdiction or to assure compliance with any applicable federal, state or local laws, ordinances, rules or regulations. You must consult a local attorney to ascertain compliance with all applicable federal, state or local laws, ordinances, rules, or regulations and to advise you of the applicable duty of care required in your jurisdiction.*

# **COURSE OUTLINE**

## **NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course**

**Course Goal:** To teach the basic **knowledge, skills and attitude** necessary for owning and using a pistol safely.

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**Student Text:** *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting* handbook

**Instructor Preparation:**

- Introduction (read and understand)
- Gathering period

**Lesson I: Pistol Knowledge and Safe Gun Handling**

Learning Objectives:

1. State the course goal and any special requirements for the five lessons.
2. Identify the principal parts of a pistol and the types of pistol actions, and demonstrate how they function.
3. State, explain and apply the NRA Rules for Safe Gun Handling.
4. Demonstrate how to handle a pistol in a safe manner.

**Lesson II: Ammunition Knowledge and the Fundamentals of Pistol Shooting**

Learning Objectives:

5. Identify the different components of a pistol cartridge.
6. Explain the firing sequence of a cartridge.
7. Explain how to properly identify and store ammunition.
8. State the major types of cartridge malfunctions and how to react to them.
9. Explain the fundamentals of pistol shooting.

**Lesson III: Shooting Positions and Shooting Qualifications**

Learning Objectives:

10. Demonstrate the learning steps to assume the benchrest position, and shoot from the benchrest position.
11. Demonstrate the learning steps to assume the Isosceles position, and shoot from the Isosceles position
12. Shoot the course qualification.

**Lesson IV: Scoring Targets, and Selecting and Maintaining Your Pistol**

Learning Objectives:

13. Properly score a pistol target.
14. Explain the basic guidelines for selecting and purchasing a pistol.
15. Identify the materials needed to clean a pistol.
16. Demonstrate how to safely clean a pistol.

**Lesson V: Continued Opportunities for Skill Development**

Learning Objectives:

17. Identify several ways to pursue pistol shooting activities after the course.
18. Successfully complete the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course written examination.

# COURSE MATERIALS

## NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course

### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Student Packet. (Provide one per student.)
- NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook
- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Lesson Plans (one per instructor)  
NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Wall Charts or Basics of Pistol Shooting Power Point
- Firearms appropriate to platform being taught (semi-auto/revolver or both)
- Dummy and live ammunition (suggest 200 rounds of factory ammunition, objectives could be met with a bare minimum of 40 rounds if the benchrest portion is conducted in the classroom with a simulator. The vast majority of students will require more than the minimum.)
- Targets (blank typing paper and qualification targets)
- Staple gun and staples, and/or target holders
- Target pasters
- Eye and hearing protection
- Empty ammunition boxes and fired cartridge cases
- Cleaning equipment
- Course evaluations (found at [www.nrainstructors.org](http://www.nrainstructors.org))
- Pens or pencils

### OPTIONAL MATERIALS

- NRA Marksmanship Qualification Program
- NRA DVD: *Fundamentals of Gun Safety* and DVD player
- NRA Range Rules Poster
- Flip chart, easel, and marker
- Dry erase board, markers, and eraser
- Name tags
- Marking pens
- Highlighter pens
- Folding chairs
- Refreshments
- NRA Member Services Guide (one per student)

Go to NRA Materials Center, <http://materials.nrahq.org> for item numbers and prices.

***No live ammunition in the classroom!***

# GATHERING PERIOD

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## **Purpose:**

- Provide adequate parking for all participants
  - Make everyone feel welcome
  - Register students
  - Inspect all equipment for live ammunition in the classroom (secondary inspection)
  - Provide an opportunity for students to get acquainted
  - Have students review the displays
  - Start on time
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**Length:** 15-20 minutes before class starts

**Facility:** Classroom or adjacent meeting area

## **Suggestions:**

- Provide a parking attendant or greeter.
- Set up a table for registration.
- Set up a gun and equipment inspection area.
- Provide student name tags.
- Have assistants mingle and welcome students as they arrive.
- Set up an NRA display area for students.
- Provide refreshments for all.
- Escort the students to the classroom when it is time for class to begin.

***No live ammunition in the classroom!***







# APPENDIX 1

## LESSON VI

### One-Handed Standing Shooting Position

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#### **Learning Objectives:**

As a result of their participation in this lesson, students will be able to:

- Safely demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to assume the one-handed standing shooting position.
  - Safely shoot a pistol from the one-handed standing shooting position, using the fundamentals of pistol shooting, at a target on a range.
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**Length:** 1 hour

**Facility:** Range

#### **Required Materials:**

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook*
- NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course Wall Charts or BOPS PowerPoint Presentation
- Eye protection
- Hearing protection
- Firearms appropriate to platform being taught (semi-auto/revolver)
- Sufficient ammunition per student to complete instruction (suggest 200 rounds of factory ammunition. Objectives could be met with less or it could take more)
- Targets
- Other training aids as appropriate

#### **References:**

- *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting handbook*

## Lesson Content

## Instructional Notes

### A. Lesson

#### Introduction

State the learning objectives for this lesson.

### B. Review of Safety Rules and Range Commands

Review NRA Rules of Safe Gun Handling, range safety rules, hygiene guidelines and range commands presented in Lesson III, as needed.

### C. One-Handed Standing Shooting Position

The one-handed standing position is more difficult than two-handed positions, but can be mastered with practice. The one-handed standing position is used in some pistol competitions because it is more challenging.

#### 1. Study the position

Demonstrate the proper one-handed grip and the one-handed standing position as described in the *NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting*.

#### 2. Practice the position without a pistol

Have the students focus on attaining a proper body position before adding the handgun.

#### 3. Practice the position with the pistol

Check for the following:

- Proper one-handed grip
- Feet shoulder width apart with body weight evenly distributed
- Body and head comfortably erect
- shooting arm fully extended with wrist and elbow locked
- Non-shooting hand relaxed in a pocket or comfortably hooked in the belt or waistband
- Pistol raised to eye level
- Shooter relaxed and comfortable

#### 4. Align position with target

Students should be positioned so that their pistols naturally point at the target center. Use the NAA exercise in the *NRA Guide to the Basics of Pistol Shooting*.

#### 5. Dry-fire the pistol at the target

Have students dry-fire their pistols at the target while applying the fundamentals:

- Aiming
- Hold control
- Breath control

- Trigger control
- Follow-through

Students should concentrate on sight alignment, focusing on the front sight, and p r e s s i n g the trigger without disturbing the sights. Students must be able to execute the fundamentals of shooting during dry-firing before they can progress to live ammunition.

*6. Shoot at targets using live ammunition*

Ensure that everyone on the range has eye and hearing protection.

Note: Students with double-action revolvers should cock the hammer before each shot, if possible.

a. single-shot exercise

Have students load and fire, one cartridge at a time. Have them fire five times at a blank target. Using the coach/pupil method, have coaches evaluate the shooters. Perform this exercise at least twice, for a total of 10 shots.

b. five-shot exercise

Have the students load five cartridges and fire at a blank target, at their own pace, to achieve a shot group. All shots should be on the target. Be sure the students rest between each shot.

Have the coaches evaluate the shooters after this five-shot string. Repeat the exercise until you are satisfied with the students' performance.

**D. Evaluation of Shooting Practice**

Lead students in a discussion of the shooting exercises. With each student, focus on the positive aspects (what the student did right).

**E. Coach Program**

Students wishing to refine the one-handed standing shooting position, and/or take part in pistol competition, should contact the NRA Coach Program.

**F. Summarize Presentation**

*1. Lesson summary*

Highlight the most important points of the lesson:

- Safely demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary to assume the one-handed standing shooting position
- Safely shoot a pistol from the one-handed standing shooting position, using the fundamentals of pistol shooting at a target on a range

*2. Question and answer period*

Ask the students if they have any questions. Answer questions.

**G. Dismissal**

Dismiss the class.

# APPENDIX 2

## THE FUNDAMENTALS OF PISTOL SHOOTING

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**INTRODUCTION:** This detailed outline is provided as a study reference to assist you in your preparations to teach the fundamentals of pistol shooting.

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### **I. Importance of a Fundamental**

- A. What does “fundamental” mean? What is a fundamental?
  - 1. “Fundamental” has a number of meanings:
    - a. basic; elemental
    - b. necessary; indispensable
    - c. primary; principal; most important
    - d. central; key
    - e. of or relating to essential structure, function or facts
  - 2. In terms of pistol shooting, a “fundamental” is an essential skill, technique or principle that provides the foundation for effective shooting.
- B. Why are fundamentals so important in sports? What role do they serve?
  - 1. They are the elementary skills necessary to the beginner for “initial success” in the early stages of skills development.
  - 2. They are the basic skills that form the foundation of a sport activity.
  - 3. They are the basic skills that can be built upon to meet the specific skill requirements of a sport.
  - 4. They are forever essential in providing a sound foundation for progressively improving the performance of a sport skill from beginner to world champion.

## **II. Eye Dominance**

Determining which eye is dominant will tell the shooter which eye should be used to aim the pistol. This information, in turn, usually also indicates which hand should be used to hold the pistol.

For most shooters, the dominant eye and dominant hand are on the same side. A minority of individuals experience cross-dominance, in which the dominant eye and dominant hand are on opposite sides. Such shooters should aim the pistol using the dominant eye, and learn to hold the gun with the non-dominant hand. If this is not possible, the shooter can cant the gun in order to aim with the dominant eye.

Establishing eye dominance needs to be done before teaching the pistol shooting fundamentals. Have the students use the following exercise to determine their dominant eye.

### **A. Skills Learned**

1. Establish dominant eye to determine which eye should be used to aim the pistol, and which hand should be used to hold the pistol.
2. The student learns how to determine the dominant eye.

### **B. Exercise**

1. Extend the hands at arm's length in front of the face. Bring the hands together, leaving a small opening between them, and, keeping both eyes open, look at a distant object through this opening. Focus the eyes on the object as the hands are brought slowly to the face. As the hands reach the face, the eye that is used to view the object is the dominant eye.
2. If the right eye is dominant, the pistol should be aimed with the right eye and held in the right hand, if possible. If the left eye is dominant, the pistol should be aimed with the left eye and held in the left hand, if possible.

### **C. Instructional Points:**

1. Repeat the exercise several times to check for consistency of results.
2. Have the students extend their hands at arm's length, and then bring their hands together, leaving a small hole between them. Then have the students look through the hole at the bridge of your nose. This will allow you to validate the identity of the dominant eye.

3. However, for cross-dominant shooters, there is nothing wrong with holding the pistol in the dominant hand in front of the dominant eye.
4. As with most any exercise, there may be exceptions to the rule, but this exercise will reliably establish the dominant eye in the majority of cases.
5. Do not give the students medical or optometric advice regarding their dominant or non-dominant eyes. Don't attempt to be an eye doctor unless you are one!

### III. Pistol Shooting Foundations

#### A. Shooting Position

1. Not a shooting fundamental, but the platform from which the fundamentals are executed.
2. A *shooting position* is the position of the shooter's body and gun in relationship to the target. The suggested teaching order in this course is the two-handed grip in the benchrest position and then the two-handed grip in the standing position.
3. Elements of a shooting position
  - a. A shooting position should be *comfortable*. This can be achieved through stretching exercises and by practicing the position.
  - b. A shooting position should be *balanced*, putting the body's center of balance over the supported points of the position. An erect head position is key, contributing to balance and also permitting the shooter to sight through the center of the lens of the eye. This, in turn, avoids distortions in the sight picture caused by looking through the eyelashes.
  - c. A shooting position should be *consistent and relaxed*.
  - d. A shooting position should be *aligned with the target*. A good position must provide a steady natural aiming area (NAA). The entire body position must be shifted to align the NAA with the target. After firing, the pistol will tend to return to the NAA.
  - e. *NAA exercise*. To establish NAA, the shooter should take his or her unloaded pistol and acquire the shooting position in relationship to a

target. The shooter should then close his or her eyes and allow the body to settle naturally into the position. The shooter then opens the eyes and determines where the gun is pointing in relation to the target. If the gun is pointing slightly to the right or left, the body is shifted to bring it naturally into target alignment.

## 5. Benchrest position

The benchrest position is the most stable pistol shooting position, and should be the position learned first by new pistol shooters. Its stability also makes it useful even for experienced pistol shooters during accuracy testing and sight zeroing.

To assume the benchrest position:

- a. Sit behind the bench or table facing the target, with both feet squarely on the ground.
- b. Extend both arms fully forward toward the target, with the pistol held in a proper two-hand grip.
- c. The back should be straight or leaning slightly forward.
- d. Rest both wrists on sandbags or other suitable support. Do not allow the gun to touch the support.
- e. Keep the head erect. If necessary, increase the height of the sandbag or other support to raise the pistol to eye level, which allows an erect head position.

## 6. Two-handed standing shooting position

The two-handed standing shooting position is probably the most versatile offhand shooting position, being useful for self-defense, competition and general recreational shooting.

To assume the two-handed standing shooting position:

- a. Stand facing the target with the shoulders and feet square to the target. The body weight should be equally distributed through both feet.
- b. Extend both arms fully forward toward the target, with the pistol held in a proper two-hand grip.
- c. Raise the pistol so that sights are at eye level. It is important to have the head erect and vertical, not canted to one side.



- d. Lean forward slightly, on the balls of the feet, so that the body can absorb recoil. Avoid leaning backward.

## B. Grip

*Grip* refers to the manner in which the pistol is held in the hand. A proper and consistent grip is essential to accurate shooting. A *two-handed grip* is taught in this course. Together, grip and position are the foundations that allow proper execution of the shooting fundamentals.

To assume a proper two-handed grip:

1. While keeping the gun pointed in a safe direction, and with the index finger off the trigger, use the non-shooting hand (“support hand”) to place the pistol in the shooting hand (“dominant hand”).
2. Fit the “V” formed by the thumb and index finger of the shooting hand as high as possible on the pistol backstrap.
3. Grip the pistol using the base of the thumb and the lower three fingers of the shooting hand. The pressure of the grip should be directed straight to the rear.
4. With the pressure of the grip applied at the “V” of the thumb and forefinger, wrap the lower three fingers naturally around the grip. This isolates the trigger finger from the grip, allowing better trigger control and less gun movement when the trigger is pressed.
5. Hold the pistol firmly, but without exerting so much pressure that the hand shakes.
6. Keep the index finger off the trigger. It should lie along the side of the frame, outside of the trigger guard.
7. The thumb should rest relaxed on the other side of the frame.
8. Place the heel of the support hand against the heel of the shooting hand. With a revolver, place the thumb of the non-shooting hand on the thumb of the shooting hand, and firmly wrap the fingers of the non-shooting hand around the fingers of the shooting hand. With a semi-automatic pistol, place the support-hand thumb forward of and below the shooting-hand thumb before wrapping the fingers of the support-hand around the fingers of the shooting-hand.

With students using semiautomatic pistols, be sure their thumbs are

out of the path of the recoiling slide.

Emphasize that uniformity is the most important aspect of the grip. The shooter should grip the pistol the same way every time.

#### IV. Pistol Shooting Fundamentals

##### A. Aiming

*Aiming* is the process of putting the gun's sights into proper relationship with each other and with the target. Aiming is composed of two elements: *sight alignment* and *sight picture*.

1. *Sight alignment* is the visual relationship between the eye and the front and rear sights. In correct sight alignment the front sight will be viewed as centered in the notch of the rear sight with the top of both sights on the same level.
2. *Sight picture* is the visual relationship of the eye, the aligned sights and the target. The aiming point may be the spot where the shooter wants the bullets to strike (center hold) or it may be another spot where sight alignment can be more precisely seen (such as a 6 o'clock hold). In the latter case, the sights are adjusted such that the shot will strike the desired location rather than the actual aiming point.
3. To achieve correct sight alignment and sight picture, it is imperative that the shooter focus on the front sight. The appearance of the rear sight will be less sharp, and the target will likely be blurred.
4. Proper sight alignment is more critical to accuracy than a proper sight picture. Even a slight error in sight alignment can cause an inaccurate shot. On the other hand, a similar error in sight picture, if sight alignment is correct, may still produce an acceptable shot.

##### B. Hold Control

*Hold control* refers to the ability of the shooter to maintain the proper sight picture and sight alignment during the process of firing the shot.

1. It is impossible to hold the pistol in a shooting position without some circular or oval motion of the sights; this is called the "arc of movement." If no errors in executing the shooting fundamentals are committed, each shot will strike within the shooter's arc of movement. With practice, the shooter will develop the muscles and coordination used in holding the pistol steady, and the arc of movement will decrease. Beginning shooters should be encouraged to accept their arc of movement and execute the fundamentals to the best of their ability.

2. A proper grip assists the pistol shooter to fire the shot without disturbing sight alignment, and thus is an essential factor in hold control. A good grip also enables the shooter to quickly re-establish the correct sight picture for subsequent shots.
  - a. The handbook describes ways to initially establish both the two-handed and one-handed grip. Some adjustments in grip may be required to accommodate the individual shooter's hand size, finger length and hand strength. If the shooter cannot dry-fire the pistol without disturbing sight alignment, grip adjustments should be made until correct sight alignment can be maintained while dry-firing.
  - b. *Consistency* is the most important element in establishing the grip. Once the shooter determines the optimum grip, it should be practiced until it can reliably be repeated, shot after shot.
3. *Natural Aiming Area* (NAA) refers to the individual, instinctive alignment of the shooter, gun and target in a specific stance. The NAA is achieved when the stance feels most balanced and comfortable to the shooter, and the pistol is in close alignment with the target. An exercise for determining an individual's NAA is described in the *NRA Guide to the Basics of Pistol Shooting*. Ensuring the students are able to establish and consistently repeat their NAA will enhance their ability to master hold control quickly.

#### C. Breath Control

Body movement while breathing can produce gun movement which impairs shooting. *Breath control* enables the shooter to hold the pistol steady and maintain proper sight picture.

1. To minimize body movement, breathing must stop while firing a shot
2. The shooter should breathe normally while settling into position. Before each shot, the shooter should take a breath, let enough air out to be comfortable, and hold the remaining breath while firing the shot.
3. If the shot isn't fired within 5 to 8 seconds after breathing is interrupted, oxygen depletion may cause muscle tremors and/or blurred vision, resulting in a poor shot. If this period of time elapses without a shot being fired, the index finger should be removed from the trigger, the gun should be lowered (while continuing to be pointed in a safe direction), and the shooter should relax, take a few breaths, and then begin the firing cycle again. Instructors should be attentive to a student's reaction to delayed shots, and have them rest and restart the shot process as needed.

#### D. Trigger Control

*Trigger control* describes the process of pressing the trigger without disturbing the sight picture. This is generally accomplished using a gradual trigger press that produces a surprise trigger break. The grip and placement of the trigger finger on the trigger may need adjustment to accomplish the correct trigger press.

1. The trigger finger pressure on the trigger should be directly rearward, and should be continuous and uninterrupted until the shot is fired.
2. Instructors should be watchful that the new shooter with a large arc of movement does not attempt to jerk the trigger at the instant when a correct sight picture may fleetingly appear. Ball-and-dummy exercises (A3-3) will usually reveal trigger jerking. Be sure your corrective instruction is positive. Tell the students to “press the trigger steadily” rather than “don’t jerk the trigger.”

#### E. Follow-Through

*Follow-through* is an important aspect of many physical skills, such as sports. In general, follow-through involves the continuation of an action, with proper technique, through and beyond the completion of the action. For example, in swinging a golf club, follow-through means that the club is swung through and past contact with the golf ball while maintaining proper grip, balance, head and body position and so forth.

1. In pistol shooting, follow-through means to maintain position, and continue aiming, hold control, breath control, and trigger control for one or two seconds after the shot is fired. Follow-through ensures that the shooter will integrate and continue all shooting fundamentals before, during and immediately after the shot is fired
2. When the mind causes the trigger finger to activate the trigger, trigger movement causes the firing pin to go forward and hit the primer, which in turn creates a spark which ignites the powder charge. This produces a volume of high-pressure gas which propels the bullet down the bore. The mind simply cannot calculate the precise moment when this process is complete and the bullet is on its way to the target. In order to ensure that all fundamentals are actually applied at the moment the shot is fired, the shooter must employ follow-through, consciously continuing the fundamentals even after the bullet has left the barrel.
3. A shooter exercising proper follow-through should be able to “call the shot.” This means that the shooter is so focused on sight alignment and sight picture that he or she can report, with reasonable accuracy, where the pistol was pointing at the moment the shot was fired. The practice of calling the shot will aid the shooter in maintaining concentration on the front sight.

**V. Teaching Basic Shooting Positions**

Only after the student has learned the fundamentals involved in firing a shot in the benchrest position is it appropriate to introduce the standing two-handed position. The two-handed standing shooting position taught in the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course is the *isosceles position*, so called because the shooter's arms form an isosceles triangle when viewed from above. There are a number of other two-handed standing shooting positions, including the Weaver, modified Weaver, and modified isosceles.



# APPENDIX 3

## PISTOL SHOOTING SKILLS

### INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD

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**INTRODUCTION:** This detailed outline is provided as a study reference to assist you in your preparations for Lesson III, “Firing the First Shots,” in the NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course.

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#### **I. Method Objectives**

- A. To expose the beginning shooter to a successful shooting experience.
- B. To instill confidence in the beginner’s ability to hit a target on his or her first attempt by properly using the fundamentals of pistol shooting.

#### **II. Method Preparation Requirements**

- A. Number of participants per instructor. The instructor’s experience, the physical size and mental maturity of the participants, and the limitations of the range facility are all factors that will determine the instructor/participant ratio. It is important that you know your capabilities and limitations and always work within them. Ideally, an instructor will be at each firing point.
- B. Equipment/materials:
  - 1. Range: one or more firing points
  - 2. Targets: 5 targets per shooter
  - 3. Firearms:
    - a. One pistol for each two shooters for dry-firing exercises. If not possible, run the exercises in relays.
    - b. One pistol for each firing point
  - 4. Ammunition: suggest 200 rounds of factory ammunition, objectives could be met with a bare minimum of 40 rounds if the benchrest portion is conducted in the classroom with a simulator. The vast majority of students will require more than the minimum.
  - 5. Accessories:
    - a. Hearing protection for each shooter and instructor

- b. Eye protection for each shooter and instructor
- C. Operational Considerations for Group Exercises:
- 1. A shooting line must be marked on the ground to maintain safety, group control and position during group exercises (tape or baby powder are good for marking lines)
  - 2. The instructor should position themselves so all shooters can hear or see instructions:
    - a. Without firearms: in front of the class, at the end of the firing line or at the center of the group
    - b. With firearms: in the rear of the class, at the end of the firing line, or at the center of the group
- D. Things To Help Your Students Concentrate
- You should do everything possible to enhance your students' learning and concentration on hitting the first target. Listed below are a few suggestions:
- 1. Small caliber—less recoil
  - 2. Proper gun fit—grip not too large or small
  - 3. Proper gun weight—not too heavy
  - 4. Shorter barrel—not muzzle-heavy
  - 5. Safety off—instructor check
  - 6. Gun functional and mechanism clean
  - 7. Reliable ammunition of good make and proper caliber
  - 8. Target should be close
  - 9. Target should be large
  - 10. Target background—clear
  - 11. Range should be well-lit
  - 12. Range should have little or no wind



13. Range should have little or no background noise
14. Clothing—shooters should wear light shirts or jackets closed in front
15. Do not over-instruct
16. Keep extraneous spectators to a minimum
17. Don't introduce or discuss competitive shooting until the students can hit the target

E. Instructional Techniques Used

1. Coach/Pupil method—Two students are paired as a team, one as the shooter/pupil, and the other as the coach. The roles are reversed upon the direction of the instructor.
  - a. Provides for increased attention to safety
  - b. Makes productive use of non-shooting time of students
  - c. Allows for productive exchange of information on the skill
  - d. Improves performance
  - e. Increases learning
2. Dry-Firing—practicing the fundamentals of firing a shot with an unloaded gun. A dummy round may be used or the hammer/firing pin may be dropped on an empty chamber. For .22 rimfire, insert a fired case to protect the firing pin.
  - a. Allows shooter to focus attention on the fundamentals rather than the results of a shot.
  - b. Allows refinement of skills before attempting live firing, thus greatly increasing the likelihood for success.
  - c. Assists instructor in analyzing skill performance.
3. Ball and Dummy Method—This is a combination of live and dry-firing used at the discretion of the instructor. The gun is loaded with a combination of live cartridges and dummy rounds. Loading of the gun is done by the instructor, out of sight of the student, so that the student does not know when he or she might be pressing the trigger on a live cartridge or a dummy round. This allows

the instructor and shooter to readily recognize errors in shooting fundamentals, especially trigger jerking, anticipation, flinching, etc.

- a. Allows shooter and instructor to analyze execution of fundamentals under circumstances that simulate live fire for the student
- b. Allows reinforcement of correct skills execution

### **III. Instructional Method**

A. Points to be reviewed with class before beginning shooting exercises:

1. Range layout and operation orientation
2. Positions and movement of people on and around the range
3. Range commands or signals to be used
4. Pay attention to instructors at all times
5. Firearms handling and shooting rules—at all times, firearms are to be carried on the range either with the muzzle pointed in the safest direction, or cased, as appropriate
6. Special procedures concerning firearms and ammunition during exercises. Instructor(s) should supervise ammunition before, during and after session.
7. Reconfirm eye dominance of shooters.
8. Other points as may be appropriate to the situation.

B. Exercises applicable to all positions:

1. Exercise One: Practicing the fundamentals using the coach/pupil method
  - a. Coach/pupil assignment—have students count off by twos and pair off, ones being “pupils” and twos being “student-coaches.”
  - b. Have students put on eye and hearing protection
  - c. Have “pupils” step up to the line at arm’s length (at least) apart with the “student-coach” immediately to the rear.
  - d. Stress the absolute importance of paying attention to, and immediately following, the directions of the instructor

- e. Re-emphasize the rules of safe firearms handling:
    - (1) Keep the gun pointed in a safe direction at all times. During the practicing of the fundamentals, pistols are to be pointed downrange. At all other times, they are to be held or carried with the muzzle pointed in the safest direction.
    - (2) Keep the finger off the trigger at all times, except when directed otherwise by the instructor.
    - (3) Keep the action open at all times, and the pistol unloaded, except when directed to load the pistol and close the action by the instructor. Now is the time to ingrain in the students the habit of frequently checking the action, magazine and chamber of a gun to ensure it is unloaded.
  - f. Remind shooters that their dominant eye determines which eye they will use to aim the pistol, and which hand should be used to hold it, if possible.
    - (1) Right-eye dominant—hold pistol in righthand
    - (2) Left-eye dominant—hold pistol in lefthand
    - (3) Cross-dominant shooters can simply raise the gun to their dominant eye for aiming.
  - g. Stress the importance of staying in position and on the line
  - h. On command, have student-coaches get a pistol and return to the firing line behind their pupil.
  - i. Per your directions, have each coach/pupil pair practice the fundamentals at their own pace.
    - (1) The student-coach checks the shooter's pistol shooting fundamentals
    - (2) The student-coach should hold the pistol or it should be placed on the bench/table when the pupil is not actually practicing the fundamentals, to avoid tiring the pupil.
2. Exercise Two—Shooters dry-fire at the target using the pistol. Instruct each pair of shooters from the rear of the line as needed.
- a. Skills learned:
    - (1) How to open and close the pistol's action.

- (2) The benchrest shooting position.
  - (3) Aiming.
  - (4) Hold control.
  - (5) Breath control.
  - (6) Trigger control.
  - (7) Follow-through.
- b. Exercise preparation:
- (1) Explain exercise to class.
    - (a) Pistol action to be closed by pupil only on command of the instructor
    - (b) Action to be opened immediately by pupil each time upon completion of dry-firing.
  - (2) Review proper procedures for opening and closing the pistol action. Let students practice before starting exercise.
    - (a) Stress muzzle control and awareness.
    - (b) Stress keeping the finger off the trigger, except when in position and ready to shoot.
  - (3) Continue same coach/pupil assignments, with students exchanging roles
- c. Exercise:
- (1) Position shooters on line with student-coaches to the rear holding the pistol, or place pistol on bench/table.
  - (2) On command from the instructor, student-coaches hand the pistol to the pupil, who closes the action and attains a proper benchrest position and grip.
  - (3) The instructor then gives the “commence firing” command. The shooter aims and presses the trigger.
  - (4) Shooter then opens the action of the pistol.

- (5) Repeat and allow discussion as necessary to improve skills.
  - (6) Have student-coaches and pupils exchange roles.
  - (7) Repeat c. (1) through c. (5), above.
  - (8) Student-coaches should return the pistol to the bench/table when the exercise is finished.
- d. Instructional points:
- (1) Check ability to properly close and open action in a safe manner.
  - (2) Be sure shooter opens action immediately upon completion of dry firing.
3. Exercise Three—individual shooters participate with the class instructor (one-on-one) in ball-and-dummy exercises.
- a. Skills learned:
- (1) Reinforce safe handling and shooting under live-firing conditions.
  - (2) To shoot at own initiative and pace.
  - (3) To load and unload live ammunition from the pistol .
  - (4) To shoot at a target using the fundamentals of pistol shooting.
- b. Exercise preparation
- (1) Explain exercise's purpose and how it works to class.
  - (2) Stress and review importance of gun handling, shooting rules, and related exercise procedures.
  - (3) Demonstrate the proper procedures for loading and unloading ammunition for the pistol used.
  - (4) Have instructors and students put on eye and hearing protection.
- c. Exercise:

- (1) The instructor loads the pistol with live cartridges and dummy rounds, with the shooter looking in the other direction as loading takes place so as not to see the loading process. The instructor then closes the action.
- (2) On command, the shooter aims, fires and follows through.
- (3) The shooter checks to see if the action is open and, if not, opens it.
- (4) Repeat the ball-and-dummy exercise as necessary.
- (5) Upon completion of the ball-and-dummy exercise, allow the shooters to fire the remaining rounds on their own.
  - (a) With the shooter holding the pistol, give the shooter one cartridge and supervise loading of the pistol.
  - (b) Allow the shooter to shoot the target at his or her own pace.
  - (c) Repeat the process until all five cartridges are fired.
- (6) If the shooter is executing the fundamentals correctly, normally the first two or three initial attempts should be dummy rounds with a live cartridge to follow. This allows the instructor to prepare the shooter for success with the first live cartridge, gives the shooter time to settle down, allows him or her to see and correct minor problems (usually flinching), and promotes shooter familiarity with shooting from the firing point independently.
- (7) After the first round is fired, be very supportive, whether the shot is a hit or miss. Give one to three more dummy rounds as appropriate before providing the second live round.
- (8) If the first two live shots result in hits, allow the shooter to fire the remaining three shots on his or her own initiative under supervision. If the shooter has missed any targets with the first two live cartridges, continue the ball-and-dummy exercise through the third live cartridge. Thereafter allow the shooter to fire the remaining shots, loading and firing at his own initiative.

d. Instructional Points:

- (1) Work with only one shooter at a time.
- (2) Pay special attention to the muzzle direction at all times during the exercise.

- (3) When handing the pistol to the shooter, cup your hand around the trigger guard to ensure safety and to train new shooters to keep their trigger fingers off the trigger upon receiving the pistol
- (4) Instructors and student-coaches conducting the exercise should be the only ones handling ammunition and the pistol except the shooter participating under supervision.
- (5) On the first attempt, if students experience great difficulty in executing the fundamentals because of live firing, continue the use of dummy rounds, up to five times. *Using any more than five dummy rounds may only increase the anxiety level and begin to tire the shooter.* If problems still persist, the instructor has two options:
  - (a) Allow the shooter to fire one cartridge. In some cases, the anxiety of the first shot may be the only problem. Firing even one shot, though the chance for success may be minimal, is necessary to get him or her “over the hump.”
  - (b) Shooters with consistently severe problems that will clearly cause them to miss the target should be returned to dry-firing until the problems are resolved.
  - (c) Knowing when to use which option will come with experience
- (6) Make the exercise fun and enjoyable for the shooter. Be enthusiastic and encouraging. Remember, it can be every intimidating performing a skill for the first time in front of peers.
- (7) Keep the exercise moving. Beginners tire quickly and the rest of the group will be anxious for their turn.
- (8) Keep instruction limited to only that which is necessary to produce a target hit (success). Too much instruction at the beginning destroys the ability to concentrate and creates frustration.
- (9) If possible, have qualified assistant instructors conduct the exercise for other shooters on other firing points.
- (10) Provide supervision for the rest of the class while working with shooters. Keep their attention and involvement.

## APPENDIX 4

# Instructor Led Training: Performance Requirements Checklist

### A. INFORMATION

Student copy

Instructor copy

STUDENT INFORMATION					
Last Name		First Name		Date	
Street Address				Apartment/Unit #	
City		State		ZIP	
Phone		Work Phone			
E-mail Address					

SIGNATURE				
Date Started		Date Completed		
Certification Earned	Level 1: Red <input type="checkbox"/>	Level 2: White <input type="checkbox"/>	Level 3: Blue <input type="checkbox"/>	Level 4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Student Signature		NRA No.		Date
Instructor Signature		NRA No.		Date

### B. CHECKLIST

In order to receive certifications, instructors must witness students performing the following requirements for each exercise and add a signature or initial to each line. It is up to the instructor's discretion on the total number of attempts and the number of successful attempts required to meet requirements.

Note: Exercise requirements may vary based on availability of materials, class size, and available locations. Add non-applicable (N/A) in place of the signature for activities that are not required for certification.

SAFETY EXERCISE				
Requirement	Notes	Date	Instructor Initials	Student Initials
<b>GUN HANDLING SAFETY</b>				
<b>1. Independent handling exercise</b>				
a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				
<b>2. Pistol exchanging exercise</b>				



**SAFETY EXERCISE**

Requirement	Notes	Date	Instructor Initials	Student Initials
a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				

**FUNDAMENTALS**

Requirement	Notes	Date	Instructor Initials	Student Initials
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**EYE DOMINANCE**

Student determined eye dominance.

Right

Non-Dominant

Left

**TWO-HANDED GRIP**

**1. Student assumed the proper two-handed grip:**

a. With a semi-automatic				
b. With a revolver				

**2. Student followed safety rules throughout the exercise:**

a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				

**FIVE FUNDAMENTALS OF PISTOL SHOOTING**

**1. Student demonstrated the five fundamentals of pistol shooting:**

a. Aiming				
b. Breath control				
c. Hold control				
d. Trigger control				
e. Follow through				

**2. Student followed safety rules throughout the exercise:**

a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				

## LOADING, COCKING, DE-COCKING, UNLOADING, AND PISTOL MAINTENANCE

Requirement	Notes	Date	Instructor Initials	Student Initials
<b>1. Student properly loaded, cocked, de-cocked, and unloaded:</b>				
a. A single-action revolver				
b. A double-action revolver				
c. A semi-automatic pistol				
<b>2. Student followed safety rules throughout the exercise:</b>				
a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				
<b>2. Student understands how to safely clean a pistol.</b>				
a. Inspect.				
b. Oil.				
c. Clean.				

## SHOOTING POSITIONS AND SHOOTING QUALIFICATION

Requirement	Notes	Date	Instructor Initials	Student Initials
<b>1. Student demonstrated the learning steps to shoot from the:</b>				
a. Benchrest position				
b. Isosceles position				
<b>3. Student followed safety rules throughout the exercise:</b>				
a. Student kept gun pointed in a safe direction.				
b. Student kept finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.				
c. Student kept gun unloaded until ready to use it.				
<b>4. Shooting qualification:</b>				
<p>After completion of Exercise IV, add the completion date and your signature to the first page of this Performance Requirements Checklist.</p> <p>Students are now ready to complete the shooting qualification. Print the targets provided. Students must earn a minimum of Level 1: Red level certification to pass the course and receive certification.</p>				





# APPENDIX 5A

## NRA BASIC PISTOL SHOOTING COURSE

### STUDENT EXAMINATION

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

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**DIRECTIONS:** Please select the *best* answer for each of the following multiple-choice and true-false questions. The questions in this examination are based on *The NRA Guide: Basics of Pistol Shooting*.

1. The three major components of a pistol are:
  - a. barrel, action and grip
  - b. frame, barrel and action
  - c. barrel, frame and hammer
  - d. cylinder, frame and barrel
  
2. Your finger may contact the trigger:
  - a. when drawing from the holster.
  - b. when you are ready to shoot.
  - c. when gripping the pistol.
  - d. when it is unloaded.
  
3. The *trigger mechanism*:
  - a. releases a spring-powered hammer or striker to fire the cartridge.
  - b. the part of a firearm in which a cartridge is contained at the instant of firing.
  - c. the end of the barrel where the chamber is located.
  - d. another term for the slide on a semi-automatic pistol.
  
4. Aiming consists of:
  - a. grip and position.
  - b. sight alignment and sight picture.
  - c. breath control and aiming.
  - d. trigger control and follow-through.
  
5. When aiming a pistol, the eye can only focus on one object at a time; therefore, you should focus on the \_\_\_\_\_ so that it appears clear and sharp.
  - a. rear sight
  - b. target
  - c. front sight
  - d. bullseye

6. To ensure you use the correct ammunition for your gun:
  - a. check the information stamped on the barrel and/or slide.
  - b. check your owner's manual.
  - c. check the cartridge box and cartridge headstamp.
  - d. all of the above.
  
7. When a cartridge fails to fire immediately, you should:
  - a. put the safety on and put the pistol down.
  - b. keep the pistol pointed in a safe direction and, after waiting at least 30 seconds (as a precaution in case of a hangfire), open the action and remove the cartridge.
  - c. open the action immediately and inspect the cartridge to determine the malfunction.
  - d. none of the above.
  
8. When gripping the pistol, you should:
  - a. use the same grip each time that you hold the pistol.
  - b. change your grip when going from short-range to long-range targets.
  - c. slowly increase your grip pressure when you begin pulling the trigger.
  - d. hold the pistol as loosely as possible to prevent muscle tremors.
  
9. *Follow-through* is important because:
  - a. it integrates, maintains and continues all shooting fundamentals before, during and immediately after firing the shot.
  - b. it helps maintain your grip.
  - c. it keeps the gun from recoiling excessively.
  - d. none of the above.
  
10. The frame of a pistol is:
  - a. made of wood or metal.
  - b. is pulled to release the hammer.
  - c. is the central component of most pistols.
  - d. none of the above.
  
11. The four components of a pistol cartridge are:
  - a. primer, wad, case and bullet.
  - b. hull, shot, slug and primer.
  - c. bullet, hull, powder and wad.
  - d. case, primer, powder charge and bullet.

12. Some of the benefits of the Isosceles Position are:
  - a. gives considerable support to the firearm.
  - b. it is natural and easy to assume.
  - c. enhances recoil absorption.
  - d. gives excellent mobility.
  
13. *Double-action* refers to the type of action:
  - a. in which pulling the trigger performs two tasks: cocking and releasing the hammer.
  - b. found only on revolvers.
  - c. found only on semi-automatic pistols.
  - d. none of the above.
  
14. Before cleaning a pistol, be sure that:
  - a. the pistol is unloaded.
  - b. The pistol is disassembled according to instructions in owner's manual.
  - c. no ammunition is present in the area.
  - d. all of the above.
  
15. A\_ occurs when a cartridge fails to fire after the primer has been struck by the firing pin.
  - a. hangfire
  - b. dry-fire
  - c. squib load
  - d. misfire
  
16. The *safety* on a pistol is:
  - a. a mechanical device, and can fail.
  - b. never fails.
  - c. is found only on revolvers.
  - d. none of the above
  
17. When shooting, you should hold your breath because:
  - a. it minimizes body movement.
  - b. it enhances concentration.
  - c. it eliminates muscle tremors.
  - d. all of the above.
  
18. Dry-firing:
  - a. occurs when the cartridge fails to fire after the firing pin strikes the primer.
  - b. is a long delay in the ignition of a cartridge after the firing pin strikes the primer.
  - c. involves practicing every phase of the firing process using an *unloaded* firearm.
  - d. is the firing of live ammunition at tin cans and other similar targets.

19. The basic rule for sight adjustment is:
- move the rear sight in the opposite direction that you want hits on the target to move.
  - move the front sight in the same direction that you want hits on the target to move.
  - move the rear sight in the same direction that you want hits on the target to move.
  - none of the above.
20. Trigger control when shooting refers to:
- pulling the trigger when the arc of movement has been eliminated.
  - the technique of pulling the trigger without causing any movement of the aligned sights.
  - both a and b.
  - none of the above.

TRUE OR FALSE QUESTIONS

21.    T     F     As the gun powder burns, it creates high-pressure gas that begins to push the bullet down the bore.
22.    T     F     Consistency, balance, support, natural aiming area, and comfort are elements of a good shooting position.
23.    T     F     Proper sight alignment is having the front sight even with the top of the rear sight, and the front sight centered in the notch of the rear sight so that there is an equal amount of space on each side of the front sight.
24.    T     F     A squib load develops less than normal pressure or velocity after ignition of the cartridge powder charge.
25.    T     F     A gun that is properly maintained will function more reliably, shoot more accurately and last longer.
26.    T     F     **ALWAYS** keep your gun pointed in a safe direction.
27.    T     F     The safety on a pistol is a mechanical device that can fail.
28.    T     F     Pistols should be stored so that they are not accessible to unauthorized persons.



- 29. T F A misfire is a perceptible delay in the ignition of a cartridge after the primer has been struck by the firing pin.
- 30. T F Most pistol cartridges can be fired from any handgun.
- 31. T F Both ear and eye protection are highly recommended whenever you are firing live ammunition..
- 32. T F Cartridges loaded to lower pressures than standard ammunition are known as “+P” cartridges.
- 33. T F You should always bury unserviceable ammunition.
- 34. T F You should always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- 35. T F Grip consistency is essential for accurate shooting.
- 36. T F Ammunition should not be present when cleaning a pistol.
- 37. T F The single most important selection criterion revolves around the purpose of the firearm.
- 38. T F Your breath should be let out slowly and steadily until the shot is fired.
- 39. T F Your non-dominant eye should be used for aiming the pistol.
- 40. T F You should always keep your gun unloaded until you are ready to use it.
- 41. T F Pistols that are fired regularly do not need to be cleaned.
- 42. T F Aiming consists of two stages: sight alignment and sight picture.
- 43. T F Trigger control is one of the most important shooting fundamentals.
- 44. T F The major components of breech-loading pistol include the frame, the barrel, and the action.

*NRA Basics of Pistol Shooting*

- 45. T F The Natural Aiming Area refers to the natural alignment of the shooter and the gun in any position.
- 46. T F The first Rule for Safe Gun Handling can be ignored while dry-firing.
- 47. T F Pistol cartridges should not be exposed to water or solvents.
- 48. T F The muzzle is the front end of the barrel where the bullet exits.
- 49. T F When shooting a pistol, you should always know your target and what is beyond.
- 50. T F Before handling a gun, learn how it operates. Read the owner's manual for your gun.

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# APPENDIX 5B

## NRA BASIC PISTOL SHOOTING COURSE

### STUDENT EXAMINATION KEY

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

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1. The three major components of a pistol are:
  - a. barrel, action and grip
  - b. frame, barrel and action (H-25)**
  - c. barrel, frame and hammer
  - d. cylinder, frame and barrel
  
2. Your finger may contact the trigger:
  - a. when drawing from the holster
  - b. when you are ready to shoot (H-13)**
  - c. when gripping the pistol
  - d. when it is unloaded
  
3. The *trigger mechanism*:
  - a. releases a spring-powered hammer or striker to fire the cartridge. (H-27)**
  - b. the part of a firearm in which a cartridge is contained at the instant of firing.
  - c. the end of the barrel where the chamber is located.
  - d. another term for the slide on a semi-automatic pistol.
  
4. Aiming consists of:
  - a. grip and position.
  - b. sight alignment and sight picture. (H-73)**
  - c. breath control and aiming.
  - d. trigger control and follow-through.
  
5. When aiming a pistol, the eye can only focus on one object at a time; therefore, you should focus on the \_\_\_\_\_ so that it appears clear and sharp.
  - a. rear sight
  - b. target
  - c. front sight (H-74)**
  - d. bullseye

6. To ensure you use the correct ammunition for your gun:
  - a. check the information stamped on the barrel and/or slide.
  - b. check your owner's manual.
  - c. check the cartridge box and cartridge headstamp.
  - d. all of the above. (H-63)**
  
7. When a cartridge fails to fire immediately, you should:
  - a. put the safety on and put the pistol down.
  - b. keep the pistol pointed in a safe direction and, after waiting at least 30 seconds (as a precaution in case of a hangfire), open the action and remove the cartridge. (H-64)**
  - c. open the action immediately and inspect the cartridge to determine the malfunction.
  - d. none of the above.
  
8. When gripping the pistol, you should:
  - a. use the same grip each time that you hold the pistol. (H-72-73)**
  - b. change your grip when going from short-range to long-range targets.
  - c. slowly increase your grip pressure when you begin pulling the trigger.
  - d. hold the pistol as loosely as possible to prevent muscle tremors.
  
9. *Follow-through* is important because:
  - a. it integrates, maintains and continues all shooting fundamentals before, during and immediately after firing the shot. (H-76-77)**
  - b. it helps maintain your grip.
  - c. it keeps the gun from recoiling excessively.
  - d. none of the above.
  
10. The frame of a pistol is:
  - a. made of wood or metal.
  - b. is pulled to release the hammer.
  - c. is the central component of most pistols. (H-26)**
  - d. none of the above.
  
11. The four components of a pistol cartridge are:
  - a. primer, wad, case and bullet.
  - b. hull, shot, slug and primer.
  - c. bullet, hull, powder and wad.
  - d. case, primer, powder charge and bullet. (H-59-61)**

12. Some of the benefits of the Isosceles Position are:
  - a. gives considerable support to the firearm.
  - b. it is natural and easy to assume . (H-89)**
  - c. enhances recoil absorption.
  - d. gives excellent mobility.
  
13. *Double-action* refers to the type of action:
  - a. in which pulling the trigger performs two tasks: cocking and releasing the hammer. (H-34)**
  - b. found only on revolvers.
  - c. found only on semi-automatic pistols.
  - d. none of the above.
  
14. Before cleaning a pistol, be sure that:
  - a. the pistol is unloaded.
  - b. The pistol is disassembled according to instructions in owner's manual.
  - c. no ammunition is present in the area.
  - d. all of the above. (H-116)**
  
15. A \_\_\_\_\_ occurs when a cartridge fails to fire after the primer has been struck by the firing pin.
  - a. hangfire
  - b. dry-fire
  - c. squib load
  - d. misfire (H-64)**
  
16. The *safety* on a pistol is:
  - a. a mechanical device, and can fail. (H-27-28)**
  - b. never fails.
  - c. is found only on revolvers.
  - d. none of the above.
  
17. When shooting, you should hold your breath because:
  - a. it minimizes body movement. (H-74)**
  - b. it enhances concentration.
  - c. it eliminates muscle tremors.
  - d. all of the above.
  
18. Dry-firing:
  - a. occurs when the cartridge fails to fire after the firing pin strikes the primer.
  - b. is a long delay in the ignition of a cartridge after the firing pin strikes the primer.
  - c. involves practicing every phase of the firing process using an *unloaded* firearm. (H-131-132)**
  - d. is the firing of live ammunition at tin cans and other similar targets.

19. The basic rule for sight adjustment is:
- move the rear sight in the opposite direction that you want hits on the target to move.
  - move the front sight in the same direction that you want hits on the target to move.
  - move the rear sight in the same direction that you want hits on the target to move. (H-85-87)**
  - none of the above.
20. Trigger control when shooting refers to:
- pulling the trigger when the arc of movement has been eliminated.
  - the technique of pulling the trigger without causing any movement of the aligned sights. (H-75-76)**
  - both a and b.
  - none of the above.

#### TRUE OR FALSE QUESTIONS

21.    **T**     **F**     As the gun powder burns, it creates high-pressure gas that begins to push the bullet down the bore. **(H-61-62)**
22.    **T**     **F**     Consistency, balance, support, natural aiming area, and comfort are elements of a good shooting position. **(H-79-81)**
23.    **T**     **F**     Proper sight alignment is having the front sight even with the top of the rear sight, and the front sight centered in the notch of the rear sight so that there is an equal amount of space on each side of the front sight. **(H-73)**
24.    **T**     **F**     A squib load develops less than normal pressure or velocity after ignition of the cartridge powder charge. **(H-64)**
25.    **T**     **F**     A gun that is properly maintained will function more reliably, shoot more accurately and last longer. **(H-115)**
26.    **T**     **F**     **ALWAYS** keep your gun pointed in a safe direction. **(H-13)**
27.    **T**     **F**     The safety on a pistol is a mechanical device that can fail. **(H-27-28)**
28.    **T**     **F**     Pistols should be stored so that they are not accessible to unauthorized persons. **(H-16)**

29. T F A misfire is a perceptible delay in the ignition of a cartridge after the primer has been struck by the firing pin. **(H-64)**
30. T F Most pistol cartridges can be fired from any handgun. **(H-63)**
31. T F Both ear and eye protection are highly recommended whenever you are firing live ammunition. **(H-16)**
32. T F Cartridges loaded to lower pressures than standard ammunition are known as “+P” cartridges. **(H-63)**
33. T F You should always bury unserviceable ammunition. **(H-64)**
34. T F You should always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to shoot. **(H-13)**
35. T F Grip consistency is essential for accurate shooting. **(H-73)**
36. T F Ammunition should not be present when cleaning a pistol. **(H-116)**
37. T F The single most important selection criterion revolves around the purpose of the firearm. **(H-109)**
38. T F Your breath should be let out slowly and steadily until the shot is fired. **(H-74)**
39. T F Your non-dominant eye should be used for aiming the pistol. **(H-71)**
40. T F You should always keep your gun unloaded until you are ready to use it. **(H-14)**
41. T F Pistols that are fired regularly do not need to be cleaned. **(H-115)**
42. T F Aiming consists of two stages: sight alignment and sight picture. **(H-73)**
43. T F Trigger control is one of the most important shooting fundamentals. **(H-75)**
44. T F The major components of breech-loading pistols include the frame, the barrel, and the action. **(H-25)**

*NRA Basic Pistol Shooting Course*

45.   **T**    F    The Natural Aiming Area refers to the natural alignment of the shooter and the gun in any position. **(H-80)**
46.   T    **F**    The first Rule for Safe Gun Handling can be ignored while dry-firing. **(H-131)**
47.   **T**    F    Pistol cartridges should not be exposed to water or solvents. **(H-63-64)**
48.   **T**    F    The muzzle is the front end of the barrel where the bullet exits. **(H-26)**
49.   **T**    F    When shooting a pistol, you should always know your target and what is beyond. **(H-14)**
50.   **T**    F    Before handling a gun, learn how it operates. Read the owner's manual for your gun. **(H-14-15)**

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# APPENDIX 6

## NRA BASIC PISTOL SHOOTING COURSE EVALUATION

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Your input is needed to improve future training courses. Please take a few moments to complete this evaluation and return it to the instructor.

### General Information

1. How did you learn about this training course?

Course Poster       School       Local Advertisement  
 Family Member       Friend       Firearms Dealer  
 NRA Website       Gun Club       Government Agency

Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please indicate your age group.

9 and under     10-12     13-17     18-21     22-30  
 31-40     41-50     51-60     61-70     71-80  
 over 80

3.  Male       Female

4. Are you an NRA member?       Yes       No

### Your Knowledge and Skills

Please rate how well you feel you can do the following as a result of attending this course, on the following scale: **1=not at all; 2=poorly; 3=satisfactory; 4=very well; 5=extremely well.**

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Identify the principal pistol parts and types of actions, and explain their operation.         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Identify and demonstrate the rules for safe gun handling.                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Identify the types of pistol ammunition, and explain how to care for and store ammunition.     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Identify and explain the five fundamentals of shooting a pistol.                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. Demonstrate the knowledge, skills and attitude necessary for owning and using a pistol safely. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Identify the materials needed to clean a pistol and demonstrate how to clean it safely.        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Identify the criteria for selecting a pistol.  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

8. Identify the sources for obtaining information about pistols and their uses. 1 2 3 4 5
9. Identify ways to pursue pistol shooting activities, and know how to obtain NRA pistol marksmanship qualification awards. 1 2 3 4 5

**Course Organization and Instruction**

Circle the appropriate number representing your response to each statement below, using the following scale: **1=not at all; 2=poorly; 3=satisfactory; 4=very well; 5=extremely well.**

1. The material presented was easily understood. 1 2 3 4 5
2. The material was presented in a logical manner. 1 2 3 4 5
3. This course has helped me gain a better understanding of the function and safe operation of firearms. 1 2 3 4 5
4. This course met my needs. 1 2 3 4 5
5. The instructors presented the information effectively. 1 2 3 4 5
6. The instructors answered my questions. 1 2 3 4 5
7. The training aids were used effectively. 1 2 3 4 5
8. The instructors made the course enjoyable. 1 2 3 4 5
9. The instructors presented a favorable image. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Your suggestions for improvement on any statement you rated 1 or 2: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Comments**

1. How do you feel this course could be improved? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What parts of this training course do you feel were most beneficial? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Please make any additional comments \_\_\_\_\_

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# NRA Basic Pistol Achievement Target

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Certified Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1

2



Level 1 Target

**NRA**

3

4

20 Shots/10 Feet Standing  
Bullets that pierce the outside edge of the circle count as hits

# NRA Basic Pistol Achievement Target

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Certified Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1

2



**NRA**

3

4

20 Shots/15 Feet Standing  
Bullets that pierce the outside edge of the circle count as hits

# NRA Basic Pistol Achievement Target

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Certified Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1

2



Level 3  
Target

**NRA**

3

4

20 Shots/20 Feet Standing

Bullets that pierce the outside edge of the circle count as hits

# NRA Instructor Training Qualification Target

20 shots/15 yards (45 feet) 16 out of 20 shots in a 6 inch group

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Certified Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

