

TRAINING STATION

Sight Insight

Working your way through sight gears for firearms



■ BY JOHN KRUPA III

As a professional trainer, my research and shooting experience have brought me to the conclusion that shooters use sights three different ways when responding to deadly force situations. I call them Sight Gears, as the shooter switches or changes “gears” in how they use their sights based on target size and distance when reacting to threats.

Sight Gear #1: Perfect Sight Alignment

This is typically used under controlled conditions where the shooter is not subject to stress related factors that are conducive with the physiological response of the human body under stress. The heart rate is under 140 BPM and the shooter minimizes movement, seeking the “perfect shot.” This gear is most commonly used during shots involving distance (usually 25 yards and beyond) or surgical shot placement where the shooter needs to make a partial body shot or surgical head shot on a threat up close.

Sight Gear #2: The Flash Sight Picture

This gear rules the world of gun fighting, especially with handguns. It is considered a complex motor skill if the shooter still has the ability to see/use their sights and is not affected by vasoconstriction. The heart rate is between 140 and 160 BPM and combat breathing is required to control the heart rate and flood the body with oxygenated blood to keep vasoconstriction at a minimum. The sight picture is no longer perfectly still during execution of the shot (usually due to dynamic action) and the front sight “wobbles” in the rear sight box, independently from the overall movement of the sight picture. Hits come quicker using this method, however, shot placement is managed by selecting an area to hit on the threat versus a precise point of impact. I call this application “Tactical Speed Shooting.” This sight gear is most commonly used with handguns from 15 yards to as close as two yards.

Sight Gear #3: Front Sight Proximity Shooting

This gear is most commonly used when the shooter is involved in a spontaneous deadly force confrontation at 10 feet or less to the threat. The heart rate rapidly accelerates well over 165 BPM. The shooter is limited to use of gross motor skills and vasoconstriction temporarily impairs the ability to focus on the front sight. Binocular vision and focus will remain on the threat until combat breathing reduces the heart rate and oxygenated blood is restored back to the eyes.

I call this, “Front Sight Proximity Shooting,” as the periphery of the handgun and front sight area are visible to the shooter, but are completely out of focus when the pistol is at full extension and indexed on target. Using this technique, the shooter is conditioned to index the handgun to where the shooter is looking and is able to get quick devastating multi-shot hits on the threat. When we run our 6-shot drill in our pistol courses using this sight gear, we are seeing shooters get six hits on target in 4-inch-to-6-inch groups on the threat’s center mass in an average of about 1-1.25 seconds. Conditioned shooters that are acclimated to this technique are applying six rounds in sub-.90 seconds.

While this is just a summary of how we teach use of sights in our training programs, the goal of this article is understanding that there is more than just perfect sight alignment when it comes to using sights in combat.

As always, stay safe, remain vigilant and Fight to Win! ♥

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