



SAGA Snippets

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SAGA Snippets
May 2026

Creating the Ideal First-Time Shooting Experience

by Andy Massimilian
7 May 2026

As a concerned gun owner, you can counter the well-funded anti-gun disinformation at the grass roots level by taking an interested newcomer with an open mind to the range for some quality trigger time. From my experience as an instructor, here's five suggestions to help make trigger time a success.

Safety Matters Most

Start off with safety instruction specific to the firearms and range you will use. As an experienced shooter, safe gun handling and proper range conduct should be automatic to you, but that does not mean you can teach the procedures from memory. Write them down beforehand so you don't miss any and be sure to explain the "why" behind them if it's not obvious. Give safety instruction while the firing line is cold or, preferably, in a separate area so you don't need to shout to be heard or answer questions.

Wearing eye and ear protection seems obvious, but other attire is also important to mitigate hazards.

Indoor or Outdoor Range?

An outdoor range is a far better venue for a first-time shooting experience. The environment is familiar and natural lighting, open air and spaciousness are major benefits. Periodic cease-fires to change targets are also a welcome respite and provide a chance to coach using a normal voice. Outdoor ranges usually allow a wider

range of targets than indoors where paper is often the only type allowed.

Even the best-designed indoor ranges can be an unfamiliar and foreboding environment with seemingly cramped spaces, more apparent noise and smoke, and sometimes dim lighting that may make an unaccustomed person apprehensive. If you can't access an outdoor range, try to use a modern indoor range that is brightly lit, has effective sound deadening material, spacious booths and good ventilation. Also go at a time when fewer people are shooting.

Handgun, Rifle or Shotgun?

I prefer a .22LR handgun for new adult shooters because it is mildly recoiling, easier to hold, more intuitive to aim and lighter weight than a rifle or shotgun. Long guns also require more precise techniques to shoot correctly because arm and body position are far more important than shooting with a handgun.

Moreover, first-time shooters find that positioning their body into a correct rifle stance can be awkward. It's certainly more instruction-intensive than setting up to shoot a pistol, and you may need to contend with gun-mount problems caused by cross-eye dominance where a right-handed shooter has a dominant left eye. Also, some people are uncomfortable placing their cheek onto a rifle or shotgun stock.

Type of Handgun

I've found that a semi-automatic pis-

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- *Why Noise Reduction Rating isn't Straightforward*
- *Wildland Magazine May 2026*
- *SAAMI Celebrates 100th Anniversary*
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- *40 Year Insignia*
- *SAGA Personal Membership*
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- *Firearm Terminology: Handgun Sizes*
- *A Tale of Two Grips: Building Beyond the First Shot*
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Continued...Creating the Ideal First-Time Shooting Experience

tol with a large enough frame to grip with all fingers of the firing hand and at least a 4-inch barrel that provides a sufficient sight radius works best for novices. Because proper sight alignment and sight picture are difficult concepts to put into practice for many first-time shooters, the ideal sight configuration is a front sight with an embedded green fiber-optic to draw the shooter's focus paired with a black square notch rear sight. Rear sights with white dots, white brackets and the like distract the shooter from a front sight focus, but can be "cured" with a black sharpie marker. Red dot optical sights also work well but make a shooter's involuntary movement or inability to hold on target obvious.

Though it may be tempting to start off with a 9mm semi-automatic—and some gunmakers push the idea for new women shooters interested in self-defense—that's a mistake for a first-time experience, because the recoil and noise is unexpected and unpleasant for most newcomers. It can also induce flinching and cause frustration when they can't hit the target where intended.

The Ruger Mark IV .22 LR pistol can create a great shooting experience for a newcomer. Though there are many other suitable handguns for a first-time experience, I prefer pistols made for informal target shooting, like the Browning Buckmark, Ruger MK IV and Smith & Wesson Victory because of their ergonomics, sights and triggers. They're also durable and will last a long time. For those with weaker arms who need a lighter weight pistol, I like the full-size SIG P322, Taurus TX22 and Smith & Wesson M&P22. For revolvers, I prefer the Ruger Single Six because of its 6-inch barrel, single-action trigger and non-muzzle-heavy feel. If you don't have any .22 LR handguns, consider a rimfire conversion kit for your centerfire pistol, which can make training and stepping up to a centerfire pistol far easier.

One drawback of using a handgun can't be stressed enough: They are easier to mis-point than long guns, which is one reason rifles are typically used to teach children and teenagers. Be sure to mention in your safety briefing that constant muzzle awareness and control are critical, and all it takes to endanger some-

one with a handgun is a mere flip of the wrist.

Targets

Targets provide performance feedback, but they also need to be fun and engaging. Start by setting paper targets close to verify your student knows the rudiments of how to aim and hold on target. Then transition to more engaging reactive targets once your student consistently hits paper reasonably near the aiming point. If they can't hit reasonably well standing up or have difficulty holding on target or aiming, have them fire off a bench rest or sandbags to start.

Steel plates that spin or fall are fun, but they need to be set at a certain distance to avoid backscatter, which may be too far downrange for your shooter to hit. Paint one side white so you can easily see the bullet strikes and the other side a different color. When it gets struck and starts to spin, challenge your students to time their next shot to hit one color and not the other.

Also try suspended wood blocks, tin cans and tennis balls, all of which can be set closer. I also like to use poker playing cards stapled to wood blocks, which are fun targets and are a take home souvenir to remind your friends of the wonderful experience you gave them.

Summary

A positive first-time shooting experience can create allies in our struggle to preserve the Second Amendment but requires careful planning and an approach that reduces stress and makes success easy in a safe and attractive environment. Don't make the experience a one-time event by pointing your friends to the NRA website where they can find formal classes and much more. If you enjoy introducing new shooters to a lifetime of gun ownership, become an NRA-certified instructor. It's one of the most rewarding experiences you can find. It certainly has been for me.

Extracted from:

<https://www.americanrifleman.org/content/creating-the-ideal-first-time-shooting-experience/>

Why Noise Reduction Rating Isn't Straightforward

<https://www.nrawomen.com/content/why-noise-reduction-rating-isn-t-straightforward>

by Jo Deering
 24 May 2026

When you're shopping for hearing protection to wear to the range, you'll quickly notice that almost every style and brand lists a Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) on the packaging. This number seems simple on its face: The sound entering your ears should be reduced by however many decibels are listed, right? Not at all, actually. But the higher the NRR, the better, right? Generally, yes. In reality, those numbers aren't as accurate as they seem.

Noise Reduction Rating is calculated or measured in a highly controlled laboratory under ideal conditions—conditions that are rarely present in real-life situations where you'll be using hearing protection. For one thing, you'll only get the reduction indicated on the package if you wear the hearing protection exactly right and if it's well-fitted.

Many of us aren't wearing our hearing protection properly—foam plugs in particular are seldom worn the right way. They should be deep in your ear, so deep that you can just barely grip them to remove. When you can see someone's foam plugs when they're looking at you because the plugs stick out so far, that person is not getting much protection. Similarly, few of us wear muffs properly. Our shooting glasses interfere with the seal, the stock of the gun bumps the muff and knocks them slightly off kilter, or they just don't fit us well and therefore can't seal properly.

Plus, NRR is measured based on a few people and extrapolated out to the general population. Since we aren't all the same, NRR is an estimate based on what 98 percent of the population will experience if the protection is fit and worn properly. If it's not, the number can be off by 50 percent or more.

And NRR isn't a direct reduction, anyway. You have to run a calculation to determine



how much noise reduction you'll actually get. For example, gunfire is in the range of 140 decibels. You might think that wearing hearing pro with an NRR of 25 will bring your exposure down to 115 decibels (140 - 25), but you'd be wrong. The actual number is calculated by subtracting 7 from the NRR and then dividing the result by 2. So $25 - 7 = 18$ and $18 / 2 = 9$. Your exposure is actually only 140-9, or 131 decibels. Why is it this way? Why can't they just print the actual number on the box? I have no idea.

Best to double up, then, right—wearing plugs and muffs so you can add the NRRs together? Unfortunately, that doesn't work on a straight calculation, either (although it is definitely helpful and a good thing to do for protection). Instead, you merely get to add 5 decibels to whichever of the NRRs are higher, and that's your new NRR. So if you wear plugs with an NRR of 26 and muffs with an NRR of 23, your combined NRR is only 31 (26 + 5). Running the calculation above tell us that your level of exposure is 128 decibels.

On top of all of that, NRR doesn't necessarily account for frequency. Low-frequency noises and higher-frequency noises might not be protected against in the same way.

So given all of this, how do you buy hearing protection? Well, NRR isn't useless—it's true that a higher number is generally better, and doubling up is better still. But it's also helpful to know the difference between active and passive protection. Essentially, active hearing protection uses electronics to detect and dampen sounds over a certain level. Electronic hearing protection also amplifies sounds under that level, which makes it easy to have a conversation, hear range officer commands, and just be aware of your surround-

Continued...Why Noise Reduction Rating Isn't Straightforward

ings while you shoot. This is a safety consideration as well—being able to hear range commands like “cease fire!” helps keep everyone safe. Active hearing protection can come in the form of muffs or in-ear style. Passive protection is everything that doesn't have electronic sound suppression.

Passive protection tends to have a slightly higher NRR than active protection, all else being equal, but many shooters find the convenience of being able to hear normally while wearing electronic hearing protection (except for loud shots, of course) to be well worth a few NRR points. And when you consider the variations in how we actually wear/fit our ear protection in real life, the passive kind might lose the NRR battle in real-world conditions, anyway.

Hearing protection, like everything else, is a bit of a trade-off. Understand when you look at Noise Reduction Ratings listed on packaging that you're not actually getting that number's worth of decibel reduction, and if you're not wearing the product exactly right, you're getting even less.

If you're looking for the best of both worlds, you can combine active and passive protection by wearing passive foam earplugs with electronic muffs overtop, or vice versa. This will lower your exposure to loud noises by the maximum amount while also allowing you to hear some level of ambient noise, so you can stay aware of what's going on around you.

Wildland Magazine
May 2026

As part of SAGA's collaboration with Wildland here is the link to your free copy of Wildland magazine, May 2026.

Click on the link in the covering email, or copy and paste the link below into your web browser:
<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/71092308/wildland-mei-2026>



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SAAMI Celebrates 100th Anniversary



By Guy J. Sagi
17 May 2026

The name is not familiar to every gun owner, but for the past 100 years, the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (SAAMI) has established the standards that ensure our safety when using modern shotshells, cartridges, firearms and more.

The organization was established in 1926 at the request of the federal government. Today, it is a sterling example of what is accomplished when engineers, designers and management – from different companies and organizations – work in concert.

SAAMI's beginnings started because of raw material shortages that lingered after World War I. Ammunition manufacturers were hardest hit, with lead, brass and copper in short supply. It was a challenging time for factory supervisors. Improving production efficiency was a painfully slow, trial-and-error process, with the latter result too common in that era's vacuum of shared information and standard-ization.

The challenges weren't much better for gun owners. Brands were using different nomenclature for shotshells of the same bore and length. Metallic cartridges with an identical design, or very similar, also differed.

To address these issues, SAAMI was established in 1926. It quickly condensed both lists significantly, eliminating much of that potentially dangerous confusion.

The group continued its efforts in both ammunition and firearm standardization. It was instrumental in the passage of the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act in 1937.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) spun off from SAAMI as a separate organization in 1961. The change allowed the original group to maintain focus on safety and technical standards, while its offspring was free to engage in activities that promoted the firearm industry at large. NSSF, for example, annually holds the Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade (SHOT) Show.

SAAMI has created some of the industry's most important safety-related documents throughout its history. The group published "Sporting Ammunition and the Firefighter," "Generally Accepted Firearms and Ammunition Interchangeability" and more. Its advisories on guns and ammunition exposed to water and fire are a wealth of knowledge for enthusiasts.

It's a standards-developer for the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), an enviable credential made possible by the engineering committees that review every cartridge and chambering submitted for approval. If they meet their approval, multiple layers of review follow before being standardized or refused.

SAAMI's efforts are rarely publicized, but as part of its mission, it lets the industry know when it has accepted a new cartridge or chambering. In February, for example, it standardized the 8.6 Blackout and .25 Weatherby RPM.

<https://www.americanrifleman.org/content/saami-celebrates-100th-anniversary/>



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PVC patches are the modern equivalent to embroidered patches. Made of durable plastic they are flexible, lightweight, and weatherproof. The new SAGA PVC patch measures 6x4.2cm (length x width), and will attach to anything with Velcro like jackets, caps, backpacks and shooting bags.

Price: R90

Double Lock Folding Knife

This folder by Coast has an extremely comfortable nylon-handled grip, a 9.2cm long stainless steel blade with an ambidextrous opener, a lanyard hole and a 3-position clip. The Double Lock is a patented safety switch mechanism that works in conjunction with a primary liner lock to prevent disengagement.

Lazer engraved with the simplified SAGA 40 Year logo, this strong folding knife is robust and will give years of good service.

Price: R380



Softshell Jacket

This quality softshell jacket is a Barron brand and is available in black with the simplified SAGA 40 Year logo embroidered on the front left chest.

The jacket has elasticated binding on the sleeve opening, front shaped panels with welt pockets, bar-tacks at pockets for added durability, inverted nylon full zip opening and an inner storm flap.

Comfortable and easy-to-wear, these jackets not only look good, but will wash well too. Available in sizes from small to 5XL.

These jackets need to be ordered - contact the office for more information.





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Firearm Terminology: Handgun Sizes



Top row left to right: Mid-Size revolver, Pocket revolver, Micro-Compact pistol.
 Middle row left to right: Sub-Compact pistol, Large Frame revolver.
 Bottom row left to right: Full Size pistol, Duty revolver, Compact pistol.

by Heidi Lyn Rao
 18 March 2026

Semi-automatic pistols and revolvers have their own terminology when it comes to the different sizes available to consumers. Understanding these terminologies and sizes will help you choose the right gun for you.

Semi-Automatic Pistols

Full Size

When we think of law enforcement or military handguns, full-size pistols usually come to mind. These firearms have a barrel length ranging from 4.5" to 5.5". The height of these guns can be more than 5". Although full-size pistols can be concealed, they are frequently open-carried due to their size.

Full-size pistols have several advantages over smaller handguns, the greatest being that they hold more rounds or have a higher capacity than other pistols. Full-size pistols can hold more than 20 rounds, depending on the caliber. These larger guns can also be easier to shoot because of the extra weight. The more weight that a firearm has, the more recoil it can absorb. With less recoil and less muzzle flip, the shooter is generally able to stay on target easier.

Full-size pistols have several disadvantages. First, the gun is heavier. This also makes the firearm harder to carry and conceal. The extra weight can be restraining, especially if you carry it for long periods of time. Another

Continued...Firearm Terminology: Handgun Sizes

disadvantage is that full-size pistols often have double-stack magazines. This means that individuals who have small hands may not be able to hold, properly grip, and control the firearm when shooting. Full-size pistols can weigh 30oz. to 45oz. (approximately 2 to 3lbs.).

Compact

Compact pistols are typically used for concealed carry. These firearms have barrel lengths between 3.5" to 4.5" long. These firearms are often up to 4.5" in height. Compact pistols are a great balance between ease of handling and ammunition capacity.

The biggest advantage of compact pistols is that they are easier to conceal than full-size firearms while still maintaining a good number of rounds. This is why many off-duty law enforcement officers carry compact pistols. Some compact pistols can hold more 15 rounds, depending on the caliber. Many compact pistols handle just as easily as full-size pistols.

A disadvantage of many compact pistols is that they still use double-stack magazines. This means like full-size pistols, individuals with small hands may have trouble maintaining a proper hold control when shooting. Compact pistols can weigh 20 to 30 ounces (1 to 2lbs.).

Sub-Compact

Sub-compact pistols are usually preferred by new gun owners or those who are just starting to conceal carry for personal protection. Sub-compact pistols usually have barrel lengths between 3" to 3.5" long and 4" to 4.5" in height. For many, these guns are the ultimate choice with their combination of concealability and ease of shooting.

The biggest advantage of compact pistols is that for those with small hands, these guns usually have a single-stack magazine.

The disadvantages of the sub-compact pistol are that they hold fewer rounds of ammunition than larger guns, often fewer than 12 rounds. Another disadvantage is their weight. Sub-compacts can weigh between 16 to 25oz. (1 to 1.5lbs). This means that recoil can

be greater, since a lighter-weight gun will not absorb as much as a heavier firearm will.

Micro-Compact

Micro-compact pistols are great for shooters with very small hands. Micro-compact handguns usually have a barrel length of less than 3" and a height less than 4". Additionally, micro-compact pistols are usually chambered in smaller calibers such as .25 ACP, .32 ACP or .380 Auto.

The biggest advantage of micro-compact pistols is that they are the easiest to conceal. Another advantage is for those who want to carry a secondary or back-up gun, a micro-compact is the way to go. These firearms are also very easy to maneuver, especially in tight quarters such as while seated behind the steering wheel of your vehicle.

The disadvantages of micro-compact pistols are that they hold the fewest number of rounds and are extremely light weight. This means that micro-compact pistols will project the most recoil. Micro-compact pistols weigh less than 20 ounces or even under 1lb. Micro-compact pistols can be very difficult to handle for someone with above average or large hands to maintain proper hold control while shooting.

Revolvers

Large Frame

Large frame revolvers are frequently used for hunting or long-range shooting. These handguns are extremely accurate at long distances. These firearms are usually chambered in calibers ranging from .44 Rem Magnum to .500 S&W Magnum. Large frame revolvers are almost exclusively designed for outside the waistband (OWB) holsters, large shoulder holsters, or chest holsters.

The biggest advantage of large frame revolvers is the fact that they act as an intermediate firearm between regular size revolvers and rifles. This means that they have the ability to stop dangerous game animals in their tracks. There have been many hunters, hikers, and backpackers that owe their life to having

Continued...Firearm Terminology: Handgun Sizes

a large frame revolver on their hip. Additionally, these heavy revolvers absorb quite a bit of recoil. Many individuals are often surprised at how easy they are to shoot. Large frame revolver barrels range in length between 4" to 12".

The biggest disadvantage to large frame revolvers is their size and weight. As mentioned above, these are not typically used for concealing. John Wayne and Marshal Matt Dillon (Gunsmoke) would have had a hard time concealing these "hand cannons!" A Smith & Wesson X-Frame revolver can weigh between 56 oz. to more than 80oz. (3.5 to 5lbs.). A Ruger Super Redhawk can weigh more than 55 to 65 ounces (3 to 4lbs).

Duty

Duty revolvers are what law enforcement and the military once carried. Examples of duty revolvers include S&W N-Frame and S&W L-Frame handguns. Like the large frame revolvers, duty revolvers are designed for outside the waistband (OWB) holsters, shoulder holsters, and chest holsters. Large frame revolver barrels range in length between 2.5" to 12".

The biggest advantage of duty revolvers is the wide range of calibers available to the shooter. Common calibers include .38 Special, .357 Rem Magnum, and .44 Rem Magnum. These revolvers are also very accurate, and the weight of these guns tends to absorb a lot of recoil.

The disadvantage of duty revolvers is their size and weight. Even though the weight of the gun can absorb a lot of recoil, it can tire out the wearer quickly. S&W L-Frame revolvers can weigh over 40 ounces (2.5 to 3lbs.) S&W N-Frame revolvers can weigh over 70oz. (4 to 5lbs.).

Mid-Size

Mid-size revolvers are great for outside the waistband (OWB) carry or concealed carry. An example of a mid-size revolver is a S&W K-Frame. Mid-size frame revolver barrels range in length between 2" to 6".

The advantage of mid-size revolvers is that they are still large enough for accuracy yet small enough for concealment. Like large-frame revolvers, these guns are chambered in a variety of calibers such as .38 Spl. and .357 Rem. Mag.

The disadvantage of mid-size revolvers is the increased recoil due to the lighter weight. A S&W K-Frame revolver weighs between 30 ounces to 40 ounces (2 to 3lbs.). Alloy frame guns can weigh as little as 16oz. (1 lb.).

Pocket

Pocket revolvers are small revolvers that can be carried in your pocket. Back in the 1950s to 1980s, these were referred to as "kit" guns. This is because people would keep these guns in their tackle box, tool kit or lunch kit. Pocket revolver barrels range in length between 1" to 3".

The advantage of pocket revolvers is that they can be kept or hidden almost anywhere. They also make great guns for those who do not feel comfortable carrying a semi-automatic pistol.

The disadvantage of pocket guns is their greater recoil, depending on the caliber. A S&W J-Frame revolver can weigh as little as 13 to 16 ounces (3/4 to 1 lb.).

Choosing a handgun is a very personal decision. Finding the right size gun is extremely important, especially if that firearm is for personal protection. When choosing any handgun, try different grips, sizes and weights of a variety of handguns including semi-automatic pistols and revolvers. Even though a smaller gun makes it easier to conceal and to carry, what you gain in ease of handling, you could be giving up in accuracy.

<https://www.nrawomen.com/content/firearm-terminology-handgun-sizes>

A Tale of Two Grips: Building Beyond the First Shot



<https://www.americanrifleman.org/content/a-tale-of-two-grips-building-beyond-the-first-shot/>

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30 April 2026

Every shooter has two grips living inside them, and most never realize it until they are exposed by a timer. One grip is built for applause, the sub-second draw, the clean first shot, the illusion of total control. The other is built for consequence, the second, third, fourth and everything that comes after recoil starts demanding enduring muzzle control. The problem is a majority of shooters only train one of them, and it's the wrong one.

You see it all the time. Clean presentation, lightning hands, gun gets out, sights flash, pew. It looks good. It feels good. The timer agrees. But the grip that got you your first hit was never built to survive anything beyond that one round. It was braced, not built. It's good enough to pass the circus trick, but not the one reality is about to test.

Here's the part that gets ignored: Recoil doesn't care about your draw speed. Physics doesn't care about your hit time if your fire-control stability collapses under pressure. The moment the gun cycles, everything you thought you had either holds or it doesn't. And if it doesn't, you're already behind. That's the tale of two grips. The one you think you have, and the one that actually survives.

Most shooters, whether they admit it or not, train the draw as a one-shot event. They chase speed to get out of the holster, rush to extension and settle for just enough stability to fire one round. They build a grip that's fast to acquire but not built to endure. Then they're surprised the second shot doesn't land where the first one did. When transitions feel like wrestling an alligator back into alignment under movement or time, it's not a failure of "accuracy" but of stability.

Tier-one shooters don't play that game. They don't separate the first shot from the rest of the string. They don't build a "draw grip" and then upgrade it on the fly. The grip they establish on the gun is the final grip from the get-go. No mid-flight adjustments like changing grip pressure or hand position. If it needs fixing midstream, it was wrong from the start.

What separates them isn't that they grip harder. In fact, that's where most people go wrong. They hear "control" and translate it into "crush the gun" which creates tension, the destroyer of performance.

A strong hand does its job, but it doesn't strangle the gun. It allows the trigger to move without interference. The support hand does heavy lifting stabilizing the platform, applying consistent pressure that shouldn't change. The moment pressure changes, the resulting destabilization translates as input to the gun, which alters muzzle alignment and results in a missed shot.

This is where most shooters fool themselves. They think they're adjusting to the gun, adapting and making corrections. What they're actually doing is chasing instability they created. You don't outshoot it. You can only build something that doesn't need fixing.

That's where the idea of a "signature grip" comes in. One that fits your specific physical profile, hand size, strength and position. Finding your own personal grip can take time. You try variations. Some parts of it work, and some don't. You refine again. Over time, what survives becomes your signature not because someone told you it was right but



Continued...A Tale of Two Grips

because it proved itself by being successfully repeatable.

And once it's there, it doesn't change much. It's just like a signature you've written for years. There are small tweaks, maybe, but the stability stays.

All the pros say the same thing; build your grip early. Get there ahead of the gun. By the time the sights matter, the muzzle is stable. Stability first and then alignment. When you're stabilized early, transitions are less bumpy, and realignment seems effortless.

It's a trade most shooters are unwilling to make. They want the fast first shot and the stable string. They want both without paying for either. But it doesn't work that way. You either build a grip that survives or you keep rebuilding it during recoil. Reconstruction always costs more than building it right the first time.

You can watch the wheels wobble if you know where to look. Not on the first shot but after the rise, recovery and realignment phase of recoil. If you need to muscle it all back, your grip didn't hold. That's not a visual focus or a trigger control problem; it's stability breaking down under stress.

It doesn't matter whether you're on a competition stage or in a defensive scenario. The physics don't change. The gun cycles the same way. The requirement is the same: Whatever you build has to survive.

The solution is simple. Implementing it isn't. You build the final grip early every time. You don't accept "close enough" on the draw. If it's wrong, fix it before the shot, not after. You train it dry until it shows up in live-fire.

You test it under longer strings, not just single rounds. You pay attention to what breaks, not what works once. In the end, there's only one grip that holds. The only time it should ever change is when the gun goes back in the holster.



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