

CHRIS ZIEGLER STUDIO

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Trigger Mechanisms; A Guide to What's What

In the past quarter century semi-automatic handgun design and development has exploded. There are so many trigger mechanisms out there that it's confusing to even experienced handgunners. In this article I'll try to cover the types, names, basic operation, and major examples of each.



The Basics

We'll start with the three primary trigger mechanisms and build from there.

SA - Single Action. In this mechanism the firearm's hammer is fully cocked, and the trigger pull performs the single action of dropping the hammer to hit the firing pin and fire the round. These pistols are generally carried "cocked & locked", where the hammer is back and safety is engaged. Well known examples of this are the M1911, Browning/FN Hi-Power, some variants of the HK USP, SIG P-Series SAO pistols, CZ-75 SA, and FN FNP SA.

DA - Double Action. In this mechanism the trigger pull performs the two actions of cocking the hammer, and then releasing it to fire the round. The

British often refer to DA as "Trigger Cocking" for this reason, and it helps many folks to think of DA in this way. DA autos are further split into three other categories as follows.

DA/SA - Double Action / Single Action. These pistols fire the first round Double Action, and all following shots are fired single action. They generally use a decocking lever to safely lower the hammer, but block contact with the firing pin so the chambered round is not fired.

Caution Decockers can fail, so always point the pistol in a safe direction when decocking. Decocker failures are rare in modern firearms, but do occasionally happen. Some older designs are more prone to failure. If you have any doubt that a decocker is not working properly have the firearm checked by a competent gunsmith or armorer.

DAO - Double Action Only. In these pistols the hammer always stays down, and the trigger operates only in Double Action. Many well known brands of pistols are available in the Double Actions. Some are only available DA/SA or DAO, and many are available in either mechanism. Well known examples include SIG, H&K, CZs and Clones, Ruger, Taurus, Kel-Tec, Walther, FN, Beretta, and Smith & Wesson metal frame autos.

DAO with reduced trigger pull - These are the new breed of DA pistols, pioneered by Para Ordnance's "LDA" - Light Double Action. These pistols keep the hammer down, but cycling the slide pre-tensions the main spring / hammer spring. The result is a lighter weight DAO trigger pull, and some also provide for a shorter trigger pull & reset. Some also have the ability to revert back to a full weight DA trigger pull to give a second try if the round does not initially fire - this is known as restrike capability. Beyond Para's LDA, examples are SIG's DAK, H&K's LEM, and some Kel-Tec and Smith & Wesson Pistols. *Edit: It has been brought to my attention that the hammer rests in a partially cocked position on the Kel-Tec PF-9, P-32, and P3AT; and possibly a few other pistols as well*

SFA - Striker Fired Action. These pistols use a Striker, basically a hammer & firing pin in one. Most operate similarly to a lightened Double Action. Cycling the slide partially pre-cocks the striker, and the trigger pull finishes cocking the striker before releasing it to fire the round. Some pistols have the striker pre cocked only a small to moderate amount and are much like DAO in a traditional hammer & firing pin pistol. Others almost fully pre-cock the striker and are much like SA in a hammer & firing pin pistol. Others yet have striker mechanisms that are much like DA/SA. Glocks are undoubtedly the best known SFA pistols; others include Springfield Armory XD, Walther P-99 / S&W99, S&W M&P and Sigma, Taurus Millennium, Mil. Pro, 24/7, and CZ 100.

THE BEST GUN DRILLS TO BECOME A BETTER SHOOTER

I am often asked how do I train when I go to the range. I decided to write a series of articles that I will add each month on the subject. Some of the drills cannot be done because of range rules at some clubs, such as drawing and firing from a holster. But many of these techniques can be done at home using dry fire practices. In fact, let's start with dry fire.

Our goal is to build muscle memory, so if we encounter a threat, we will automatically be able to operate our firearm accurately and safely without having to think about every step. (Think of using a clutch and shifting gears.)

I often tell the story of how dry fire can make a good shooter out of a novice. When I entered Marine Corp boot camp in 1965, my world was turned upside down. Many of us had some shooting experience, some never touched a gun before, and of course, some thought they were experts (and weren't). We were given two weeks to qualify with our rifles. Our PMI's (Primary Marksmanship Instructors) had us doing dry fire for a whole week, before we shot a live round. Sight alignment and trigger control- click, click, click- over and over. The next week we started sighting our rifles in- an M-14 in .308 caliber, with open peep sights. By the last day of shooting, our whole platoon qualified- we were shooting bullseyes at 500 yds- the length of five football fields- with open sights!

So dry fire practice will work for you, and it doesn't waste any ammo. Most of this discussion pertains to semi-auto pistols.

To start, triple check that your firearm is empty, with no live ammo nearby. Mount a target in a wall, preferably a solid wall (just in case). A man size silhouette is what I use.

Get or make dummy rounds. Stay away from the cheap orange plastic ones, they don't cycle and extract well. Buy the better ones made from aluminum, or make your own if you reload. Drill a 3/16" hole through the side of the case to identify them. You will use them with dry fire, and also at the range with live fire.

Using dummy rounds, load a magazine, and insert into the gun. Rack the slide to load a round in the chamber. Fire one round, and now unload the gun. The sequence is- Remove the magazine, rack the slide to remove the live round from the chamber, check the chamber. Do this several times so you can load and unload the gun without fumbling with the slide, etc.

If you are working with a pistol or revolver that you keep in drawer for personal defense, start with the pistol held in the low ready position. Bring it up to your sight, place finger on the trigger, and press the shot.

If you are drawing from a holster, use your support hand to move any garment out of the way, grasp the grip as high as you can, and withdraw the gun from the holster. Rotate it toward the target, switch the safety off, press forward, grasping with your support hand, acquire the sights,

and press the trigger. Start slow and be deliberate, and the speed will pick up. Practice this move until you get smooth, and keep your eye on the target.

Now, holster the pistol. Don't look for speed here. Finger off the trigger, safety on, watch the gun go into the holster. Also, place your leg either forward or back, so if you have an unintentional discharge, you don't hit your leg.

Other drills you can do with dummy rounds are:

Failure to fire- when the gun goes "Click" instead of "Bang", slap the bottom of the magazine to insure it is seated properly. Rack the slide to feed a new round, aim and fire.

Failure to eject- This is also called a "stovepipe", where the spent cartridge is sticking out of the ejection port. (You can set this up with an empty case, or a dummy round.) You can't just rack the slide, because the case will fall into the action and create more problems. Remove the magazine, rack the slide several times to clear the action, re-insert the magazine, rack the slide to load a new round, aim and fire.

The more you practice these drills, the better you will shoot at the range. Next month we will go into live fire drills.

NEW GUNS- IN STOCK- READY TO GO!

Any guns listed with GOG comes from Gallery of Guns, and carries a lifetime replacement warranty- All new Glocks included! Normally Glocks only have a one year warranty.

Shotguns	SALE
Stevens 12 ga pump- Mod 520, 18 ½" bbl	219.00
H&R 20 ga- vertical foregrip- HD model, Hi-Viz fiber optic sight	229.00
Stevens 20 ga pump, Mod 320, pistol grip buttstock 18 ½" bbl	229.00
Legacy- Pointer- 20 ga. Youth- single shot- full choke	195.00
IAC Hawk 981, 12 ga pump, 18 ½" bbl, two available	189.00
Mossberg-, 590 Shockwave, 14" bbl, your choice in 20 ga, .410 ga.	359.00
Mossberg 930, Semi-auto 12 ga, 3"', 26" bbl, Bottomland camo, accu-chokes, full XX turkey	499.00
TriStar- Silver Eagle- 20 ga, semi-auto, 25" VR bbl, chokes	299.00
Savage 310-.410 ga- Single shot Turkey Gun- Camo, optics rail, full choke	179.00
Rossi .410 ga- 28" bbl, IC	149.00
Rifles	
Marlin XT-22 .22 LR, bolt w/ tubular mag, 4-12 x 50 Nikko Sterling scope	299.00
Ruger SR-22, .22 LR, Full Float Handguard, Rapid-Deploy sights GOG	369.00
T/C Compass- Bolt action- calibers .243, .30-06, .22-250- GOG	359.00
Ruger 10/22- .22 LR, SS bbl, Take-Down with backpack GOG	319.00
Rossi RB-17, .17 HMR, bolt,	159.00
Remington 597, .22 LR, semi-auto, w/ 3-9 x 40 mm scope GOG	219.00
Ruger 10/22 .22LR, wood stock	235.00
Savage SV-42, .22LR/.410 O/U takedown w/ backpack	419.00
Chiappa- Little Badger- .22LR, folding rifle w/ case	176.00
Century Arms RAS-47- 7.62 x 39, 1- 30 rd, 1- 40 rd mag, black furniture	615.00

Savage Axis XP- .308- Camo, 3-9 x 40 scope	395.00
Savage Axis XP- .223- Camo, 3-9 x 40 scope- Great coyote gun	339.00

Handguns

Taurus PT-111 9mm- Two tone, 2- 12 rd mags	229.00
Taurus 1911- .45 ACP, Black frame, gray slide	529.00
Charter Arms, Pathfinder, .22LR revolver six shot, SS	325.00
Honor Guard- 9mm, 3" bbl, interchangeable grip, 1- 8 rd ext mag, 1- 7 rd flush mag GOG	427.00
Charter Arms- Lavender Lady- .22 WMR revolver- 2" bbl	339.00
S&W- M&P 9C- 2.0- 9 mm, 2-15 rd mags GOG	489.00
EAA Bounty- .22LR/ .22mag SA revolver, 6 ½" bbl	289.00
Ruger EC9s- 9mm, 3.2" bbl, 7+1	229.00
Heritage- Rough Rider- .22LR SA revolver, 6 ½" bbl	129.00
Chiappa- 1873-22, .22 LR SA revolver, 6 1/2" bbl	165.00
S&W Bodyguard- .380, , 2- 6 rd. mags GOG	335.00
Ruger LCP, .380, 1- 6 rd mag, pocket holster	219.00
Taurus- M85- .38 SPL- Stainless Steel- 2" bbl 5-shot	327.00
Taurus- Spectrum- .380, Black, 2- 6 rd mags	199.00
S&W- M&P Shield- .45 ACP- 1- 6 rd mag, 1- 7 rd mag	419.00
S&W- M&P-22 Compact, .22LR, 2- 10 rd mags, threaded bbl	349.00
Glock 45 Gen 5, 9mm, 3- 17 rd mags, loader, case GOG	539.00
Glock 19 Gen 5, 9mm, 3- 15 rd mags, loader, case GOG	539.00
Glock 48- 9mm- 2- 10 rd mags, Ameriglo night sights, case	429.00
Glock 43- 9mm, 2- 6 rd mags, GOG	448.00
Glock 42- .380, 2- 6 rd mags, GOG	399.00
Glock 17- Gen 4- 9mm, 3- 17 rd mags, loader, case GOG	499.00
Glock 21- Gen 4- .45 ACP, 3- 13 rd mags, loader, case GOG	546.00
Glock 30- Gen 4- .45 ACP, 3- 10 rd mags, loader, case GOG	546.00
Ruger LCR, .38 SPL, case	359.00
Ruger Blackhawk- .357 mag + 9mm convertible, 6 ½" bbl	599.00
S&W Shield- .380- EZ rack, 2- 7 rd mags	359.00
Mossberg MC-1- 9mm, 2- 7 rd mags	329.00
Browning Buckmark- UFX Pro Target, .22 LR, 4" Bull barrel, 2- 10 rd mags	389.00
S&W Victory- .22 LR, 2- 10 rd mags	369.00

USED GUNS

LC Smith Model 00, 12 ga. SxS, Mfg 1908	399.00
Ruger LCR- .38 Spl- LIKE NEW	359.00
Sig Sauer- P238- .380- w/ holster and case LIKE NEW	479.00
Remington Sportsman, 12 ga, semi-auto, TWO BBLs, 26" + 30"	549.00
Charter Arms- Off Duty- .38 SPL, DOA, 2" bbl, LIKE NEW	319.00
Kel-Tec P-32, .32 auto, bright blue frame, LIKE NEW	189.00
Arminius- Colt 45, .45 LC, color case hardened frame, 5 ½" bbl, LIKE NEW	325.00
Sig Sauer P-229, .40 S&W, 3 ¾" bbl	370.00
S&W- Sigma, .40 S&W, holster, LIKE NEW	295.00
Colt SP-1 AR-15, .223, Early model, two 20-rd mags, EXCELLENT CONDITION	1299.00
Bersa BP9CC, 9mm, 2 10 rd mags, holster LIKE NEW	199.00
Ruger- LC-380- .380 (extra mags in stock)	199.00
Ruger Blackhawk- .41 mag, 6 ½" bbl, holster, gunbelt, ammo	499.00
Taurus M 44- .44 mag, S.S. 6 ½" ported bbl, adj. sights LIKE NEW	429.00
Henry H004, .22 LR Lever rifle, Golden Boy, Octagon barrel, NEVER FIRED	459.00
Davis P380- .380, nickle plated LIKE NEW	89.00

AMT- Backup, .22 LR, S.S.	199.00
Remington 700 SPS- .223, bolt action, 26" heavy barrel, LIKE NEW	425.00
Mauser- VZ 24, 8mm bolt, nice collector piece w/ sling	299.00
Savage MK II, .22 LR bolt w/ 3- mags, wood stock	195.00
Sig Sauer P-220 .45 ACP- 2 mags, Hogue grips, EXCELLENT CONDITION	399.00
SAR Arms- 12 ga Home defense pump shotgun, Ghost ring sights, breaching choke, LIKE NEW	249.00
Ithaca Featherweight Mod 37, 12 ga pump, 30" VR bbl, mod choke	449.00
Mossberg 500 AT- 12 ga pump shotgun, 28" I.C. bbl	159.00
Marlin 25 N- .22 LR bolt action	89.00
S&W SD-40 VE, .40 S&W, Two Tone	189.00
Colt 1911 Combat Commander .45 ACP, blued steel frame, Series 70, 3- mags	675.00
Chiappa 1911-22- .22LR, Tactical, Fiber optic sights, 2- 10 rd mags	249.00
Marlin Model 55 Goose gun, 12 ga, bolt, 36: bbl full choke	115.00
Kimber- Solo Carry- 9mm, 1- 6 rd, 1- 8 rd mag	385.00
Mossberg 715-T, .22 LR, 2- 25 rd mags, scope	189.00
Mossberg 146 A-B .22 LR bolt, tubular mag, scope	99.00
Marlin 15Y- .22 S, L, LR Single shot bolt, youth	89.00
Anderson AM-15, 300 Blackout, Bronze upper and free float forearm, muzzle break	499.00
Winchester 71 Deluxe- .348 WCF, lever action, peep sight on bolt	1600.00
Mossberg 590 Shockwave- 12 ga, 14" bbl, LIKE NEW	269.00
Chiappa M9-22, .22 LR, 2- 10 rd mags	139.00
Sig Sauer P-320 X5, 9 mm, Desert Tan, 2- 21 rd mags LIKE NEW	580.00
Ruger MK-IV Standard, .22 LR, 2- 10 rd mags LIKE NEW	289.00
Browning Hi-Power 9mm, Belgium made, 3- mags, EXCELLENT CONDITION	589.00
Ruger OLD NAVY, .45- Cap and Ball, BLACK POWDER	349.00

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PLEASE NOTE- IF YOU HAVE AN OLD FIREARM THAT YOU NO LONGER USE, WE CAN SELL IT FOR YOU ON CONSIGNMENT. WE ALSO CONSIDER TRADES. WE ALSO BUY ESTATES.

For lots of additional guns, visit **Gallery of Guns** website. We are a Gold Dealer with them, and can have any handguns here in two days, long guns are three days. You also get their **Lifetime Replacement Warranty** (for instance, Glock has only a 1 yr. warranty). Check out the details online.

We are available for gun transfers. A lot of websites on the internet already have our FFL on file. If you need a gun shipped in from a dealer that does not have our information, just give us their email or FAX and we will send them a copy of our FFL.

We also will package and ship your firearms.

INTRODUCTION TO PERSONAL AND HOME DEFENSE FIREARMS CLASS

This class is conducted here at our store. Whether you have experience with firearms, or are just considering buying one for protection, this class will give you the basics that will help you make an informed decision. You will receive hands-on training with different types of firearms (handguns and shotguns), using lasers and dummy rounds instead of live ammo. The different types of holsters will be covered. Safety rules will be stressed, Instruction covering loading and unloading, proper grip, proper sight picture will be part of the training. The class will take about 2 hrs, and you will get a manual and a personal pepper spray at the end of the class. We also discuss current concealed carry laws and PA state Castle Doctrine and Stand Your Ground laws. We stress layers of protection, with the firearm used as a last resort.

The cost is \$45.00 per person. Class times are at 6:30 PM during the week, and Saturday at 4:30 PM. Call for reservations.

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