

THE PREPARED CITIZEN

MASTERING BODY POSITION

FOR RECOIL CONTROL AND BALANCE



| THE
CARRY GUY[®]

ARE YOU READY?[™]

The Carry Guy Complete Manual: Proper Standing and Body Position for Recoil Control and Balance

Safety First

Always keep the firearm pointed in a safe direction. Keep your finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard until your sights are on the target and you have decided to shoot. Treat every firearm as loaded. Be sure of your target and what is beyond it. This material summarizes standard training practices from NRA materials, published instruction on the Modern Technique, competitive and defensive curricula, and documented descriptions of Weaver, Isosceles, and related positions. It is not a substitute for in-person professional training. Dry-fire only with a verified unloaded firearm and no ammunition present.

Who This Is For

New shooters establishing fundamentals. Experienced shooters whose muzzle rises excessively or whose groups string vertically or laterally. Anyone who wants better recoil management and balance while shooting from a standing position.

What Proper Stance and Body Position Do

Stance provides a stable platform. Correct body position places weight forward, keeps joints soft enough to absorb recoil, and allows the shooter to return the sights to the target quickly. Different documented stances trade profile, mobility, armor coverage, and recoil management differently. No single stance is universally superior for every shooter or situation.

When to Apply It

On every standing shot, live or dry. During presentation. When transitioning between targets. When shooting and moving. Consistently so the platform remains the same shot to shot.

Where to Practice

Safe range with proper backstop for live fire. Controlled environment with verified unloaded firearm for dry fire. Open space that allows full extension and foot placement without obstruction.

How: Complete Instruction on Standing Positions

Universal Elements Across Stances

- Feet roughly shoulder-width or slightly wider for a stable base.
- Knees slightly bent (never locked).
- Weight biased forward on the balls of the feet rather than the heels.
- Upper body slightly forward of the hips so recoil drives the shooter back toward neutral rather than onto the heels.

- Head erect, gun brought to the eyes (do not drop the head to the gun).
- Soft elbows that can act as shock absorbers rather than fully locked rigid joints in most modern teaching.

These elements appear across NRA Family materials, competitive instruction, and defensive training descriptions.

Isosceles Stance (and Modern / Power Isosceles)

Square the hips and shoulders toward the target. Feet roughly shoulder-width apart, toes pointing generally toward the target. Both arms extend forward so the arms and chest form a triangle (the origin of the name). Elbows are extended but typically kept slightly soft.

Modern or “power” variations often stagger the feet slightly (support-side foot a few inches forward), increase knee bend, and push the shoulders forward of the hips for better recoil absorption.

Documented advantages: natural under stress, even transitions left and right, presents the front of body armor toward the threat, relatively easy to learn.

Documented considerations: presents a larger profile if not wearing armor; some shooters find fully locked arms transmit recoil more directly into the shoulders.

(Sources: NRA Blog, NRA Family, Shooting Illustrated, The Armory Life, competitive shooter descriptions.)

Weaver Stance

Blade the body approximately 30–45 degrees to the target. Support-side foot forward, strong-side foot back (boxer-like or fighting stance). Strong arm nearly straight and pushing the gun forward; support arm bent with the elbow pointing downward and pulling rearward. This creates isometric (push-pull) tension between the hands.

Named for Jack Weaver and popularized as part of the Modern Technique associated with Jeff Cooper.

Documented advantages: bent arms act as shock absorbers; reduces frontal profile; strong isometric tension helps manage muzzle rise.

Documented considerations: more coordination required to maintain tension; can be slower to transition to the strong side; body armor side seams may be more exposed; a 1989 review of officer-involved shootings found most officers squared up in an Isosceles-style position under stress even when trained in Weaver.

(Sources: NRA Blog, The Armory Life, historical accounts of Jack Weaver and Jeff Cooper, published analyses of police shooting data.)

Chapman / Modified Weaver

Bladed footwork similar to Weaver but with the strong arm locked more fully (like a rifle stock) and the support arm still providing rearward pressure. Some descriptions emphasize the strong-side shoulder forward.

Documented as a hybrid used by some competitive and practical shooters for a combination of stability and tension.

Combat Stance

In modern defensive literature this term is often used interchangeably with a squared or slightly bladed Isosceles-style position optimized for movement and armor. Exact definitions vary by instructor and era. Some older texts used “combat stance” more loosely for any two-handed fighting position. There is not a single universally accepted technical definition distinct from modern Isosceles variations.

How Stance Affects Recoil Control and Balance

Forward weight and soft joints allow the body to absorb rearward force and return the gun more quickly. Locked knees or weight on the heels allow the shooter to be driven backward. Push-pull tension (classic Weaver) uses muscular opposition; squared Isosceles uses skeletal structure and body mass more directly. Both approaches are documented as effective when executed consistently. Excessive tension can create fatigue and inconsistency; insufficient structure allows the muzzle to rise.

Common Errors

- Weight on the heels (leaning back).
- Locked knees or elbows.
- Feet too narrow.
- Dropping the head to the sights instead of bringing the gun to the eyes.
- Inconsistent foot placement shot to shot.
- Mixing elements of different stances without deliberate practice.

Drills

- Dry-fire presentation into each stance, checking foot placement, knee bend, and weight distribution.
- Live-fire slow pairs or strings focusing only on recovery speed and sight return.
- Transition drills left and right to feel differences in mobility.
- Video review or instructor feedback on whether weight stays forward after the shot.

Special Considerations

Body armor favors squared positions for plate coverage. Cross-eye dominance can make bladed stances more difficult for a clean sight picture. Physical limitations (elbow or shoulder issues)

may favor one position over another. Left-handed shooters reverse the strong/support foot descriptions. There is not universal consensus that one stance is superior for all shooters; documented instruction presents Weaver and Isosceles (and their modifications) as valid tools with different strengths. Individual testing under qualified supervision is required to determine what produces the most consistent recoil control and balance for a given person and firearm.

Conclusion

Proper standing position places the body in a balanced, forward-weighted platform with soft joints so recoil can be managed and the sights recovered quickly. Learn the documented stances, understand their differences, and train the one that keeps your gun under control.

For hands-on training go to www.thecarryguy.com.

isosceles Stance



Weaver Stance



Chapman Stance

