

THE PREPARED CITIZEN

MASTERING DRY FIRE PRACTICE

FOR IMPROVED HANDGUN SKILLS



| THE
CARRY GUY®

ARE YOU READY?™

The Carry Guy Complete Manual: Proper Dry Fire Practice for Handgun Skills

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 press. Treat every firearm as loaded. Be sure of your target and what is beyond it. Dry fire is defined by the NRA Firearms Sourcebook as releasing the firing pin on an unloaded chamber. This material summarizes standard safety practices and training methods from NRA Family, NRA Shooting Sports Journal, Shooting Illustrated, and common defensive and competitive instruction. It is not a substitute for in-person professional training or the firearm manufacturer's manual. Some firearms (especially certain rimfire and older designs) can be damaged by dry firing; consult the manufacturer's documentation before proceeding.

Who This Is For

New shooters building fundamentals. Experienced shooters who want more trigger time without range trips. Anyone seeking to improve presentation, trigger control, sight picture, reloads, and gun handling between live-fire sessions.

What Dry Fire Practice Is

Dry fire is deliberate practice of shooting and handling skills with a verified unloaded firearm. It allows focused repetition of fundamentals without recoil, noise, or ammunition cost. Skills built in dry practice transfer to live fire when the same techniques are used consistently. Laser systems can provide visual feedback on muzzle direction at the moment of the trigger break; practice without a laser relies on visual observation of the sights.

When to Practice

Regular short sessions (commonly 10–20 minutes) several times per week rather than long infrequent ones. When alert and free of distractions. After confirming the firearm is unloaded and all live ammunition is removed from the area. Not when rushed or interrupted.

Where to Practice

A dedicated dry-fire area with a safe backstop capable of stopping a bullet (for example, a concrete or brick wall, or a target backed by body-armor material). No live ammunition anywhere in the room. A specific dry-fire target used only for this purpose. Never practice by pointing at televisions, mirrors, light switches, or other household objects.

How: Complete Instruction

Core Safety Rules for Dry Fire

These practices are consistently documented in NRA materials and instructor guidance:

- Remove all live ammunition from the practice area before starting. Place it in another room.
- Unload the firearm outside the practice area when possible: remove magazine, lock slide open or open cylinder, visually and physically inspect chamber and magazine well.
- Check the firearm again upon entering the practice area.
- Use a chamber flag or barrel-blocking device if available.
- Point only at the designated dry-fire target with a safe backstop behind it.
- Wear eye protection.
- Keep the finger off the trigger until sights are on the target and the decision to press is made.
- If interrupted, stop, re-verify the firearm is unloaded, and restart the safety checklist.
- Do not mix dummy rounds with live ammunition; use clearly marked dummy rounds only.
- End the session deliberately; put the firearm and target away. Do not continue with “one more press.”

Practice Without a Laser

Focus on the front sight remaining still during the trigger press. Observe whether the sights move as the trigger breaks. Work presentation, stance, grip, trigger control, and reloads. Use the sights themselves as feedback. This method builds pure gun-handling volume and is available with any unloaded firearm.

Practice With a Laser

A laser cartridge (or compatible training system) emits a visible or infrared pulse when the trigger is pressed, showing where the muzzle was pointed at the break. Use it to diagnose movement during the press. Do not chase the laser onto the target; acquire the sights first, then press. Infrared systems reduce the tendency to walk the dot. Laser feedback does not replicate recoil, slide cycle, or full trigger reset on most semi-automatics (the slide must often be racked or a reset device used). Documented use is as a diagnostic tool, not a full replacement for live fire. Confirm manufacturer compatibility and safety rules for any laser cartridge.

Common Dry Fire Drills

- Presentation and press: From a ready position or holster (if legal and safe), present the firearm, acquire a proper sight picture, and press while watching the front sight.
- Trigger control: Slow presses focusing solely on keeping the sights still at the break.
- Reset and follow-up: Press, allow reset under finger contact (or rack as needed), and press again.
- Reloads: With dummy rounds only, practice magazine changes while maintaining muzzle direction.
- Transitions: Move between two or more designated targets, acquiring a sight picture each time.

- Draw-to-first-shot (if holster practice is appropriate): Smooth presentation followed by a controlled press.

Perform each drill deliberately. Track consistency rather than speed until the movement is correct.

Common Errors

- Live ammunition remaining in the room.
- Failing to re-check the chamber.
- Pointing at non-designated objects.
- Focusing on the target or laser instead of the front sight.
- Practicing while distracted.
- Expecting laser results to fully replace live-fire confirmation.

Special Considerations

Rimfire firearms generally require snap caps to avoid firing-pin damage. Semi-automatic trigger reset usually requires cycling the slide unless a training magazine or reset device is used. Laser systems vary; some provide constant beams while the trigger is held, others pulse only on the break. There is not universal consensus that laser feedback is required for effective dry practice;

many documented programs achieve results with sights alone. Individual vision, firearm design, and local laws (especially regarding holster draws indoors) further affect application. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations and local regulations.

Conclusion

Proper dry fire practice builds handling, presentation, trigger control, and sight skills through safe, deliberate repetition. Follow the documented safety rules every session, use laser feedback as a diagnostic tool when desired, and confirm progress with live fire under professional supervision.

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



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