

THE PREPARED CITIZEN

MASTERING THE PROPER HANDGUN TRIGGER PULL

FOR ULTIMATE ACCURACY AND CONTROL



| THE
CARRY GUY®

ARE YOU READY?™

The Carry Guy Complete Manual: Mastering the Proper Handgun Trigger Pull

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 fundamentals, competitive and defensive instructor curricula, and published instruction (Massad Ayoob, NRA Shooting Sports Journal, etc.). 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 learning fundamentals. Experienced shooters whose groups drift left or right. Anyone who wants consistent hits and clean follow-up shots without disturbing the sights.

What Proper Trigger Control Is

Trigger control means pressing the trigger straight to the rear so the sights stay aligned until the shot breaks, then allowing the trigger to reset under control. The trigger finger must move independently of the rest of the hand. Placement of the finger on the trigger face determines whether that rearward press stays straight or introduces lateral force.

When to Apply It

On every live-fire shot and every dry-fire press. During the draw once the sights reach the target. During reset for follow-up shots. Never before the sights are on target.

Where to Practice

Safe range with proper backstop for live fire. Controlled environment with verified unloaded firearm for dry fire.

How: Complete Trigger Pull Instruction

1. Index and Entry

Keep the trigger finger straight and indexed along the frame until the sights are on the target. Only then move the finger onto the trigger.

2. Correct Finger Placement

Place the center of the pad of the index finger (the fleshy area behind the tip, centered on the fingerprint whorl) on the face of the trigger. For many modern striker-fired pistols this is the standard teaching. On some longer or heavier pulls (certain double-action revolvers or 1911s), some instructors and experienced shooters place the distal joint (power crease) for more leverage. The exact spot must allow a straight rearward press for your hand size

and the specific firearm. (Sources: NRA-related materials, Ayoob writings, competitive instruction.)

3. The Press

Press the trigger straight back using only the trigger finger. Isolate it—do not tighten the rest of the grip or move the other fingers. Keep constant rearward pressure until the shot breaks. Do not jerk, slap, or stage in a way that stops the movement. After the break, allow the trigger to reset under control while maintaining contact.

4. Too Little Finger on the Trigger

Using only the very tip of the finger. The circular motion of the finger closing tends to push the muzzle toward the support-hand side (right for a right-handed shooter). The press is less stable and the finger can slip off under speed or recoil. Result on target: groups shift or string toward the support side.

5. Too Much Finger on the Trigger

Placing the finger so the first joint or more is past the trigger face (finger wrapped deeply). The finger contacts the frame or support hand, and the closing motion pulls the muzzle toward the strong-hand side (left for a right-handed shooter). It can also interfere with full reset or create discomfort. Result on target: groups shift or string toward the strong side.

6. How It Affects the Shot

Any lateral force moves the muzzle before or during the break. The sights leave the intended point of aim. Even small deviations open groups, especially beyond close range. Consistent pad placement plus a straight isolated press keeps the muzzle movement minimal so the bullet goes where the sights were when the trigger broke.

Common Mistakes

- Finger on the trigger before sights are on target.
- Inconsistent placement shot to shot.
- Anticipating recoil and jerking.
- Tightening the whole hand instead of isolating the finger.
- Failing to reset under control.

Drills

- Dry-fire: establish grip, place finger correctly, press while watching sights stay still.
- Ball-and-dummy (live range): reveals anticipation and flinch.
- Deliberate slow-fire groups focusing only on finger placement and straight press.
- Reset drills: fire, reset under finger contact, fire again without re-gripping.

Special Considerations

Hand size relative to grip circumference and trigger reach changes the optimal pad or joint placement. Smaller hands on larger grips may need less finger; larger hands on smaller grips may need more. Left-handed shooters reverse the left/right shift directions. There is not universal consensus that every shooter will see identical left/right shifts; individual biomechanics and firearm fit matter. Some high-level instructors emphasize straight-back press and solid grip

more than exact pad vs joint, provided the motion does not disturb the sights. Test what keeps your sights still on your specific gun.

Conclusion

Proper finger placement and an isolated straight-back press are fundamental to accurate shooting. Master them and groups tighten, follow-ups speed up, and confidence rises. Practice deliberately and get professional feedback.

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



