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A NEW FOCUS ON HANDS-ON TRAINING: Total Participant Involvement (TPI)

By Jim Giragosian, Instructor/Training Counselor
Program Coordinator



The National Rifle Association has been committed to the promotion of firearm training since its founding in 1871. However, the philosophy that determines the form of its training has been continuously reviewed, re-evaluated, and revised. This is necessary in order for the NRA to incorporate the latest teaching methodologies and instructional techniques in its programs, to meet the changing needs of its members and the shooting public, and to maintain its leadership role as the nation's premier firearm training organization.

During the latest review, it was determined that a stronger emphasis on hands-on training would improve the effectiveness and success of NRA's training programs. The result is a new focus on active training, which the NRA calls *total participant involvement*, or TPI. A variety of teaching methods are used in NRA training programs, but actual experience has always been considered the ideal. The TPI approach stresses *active training* and *learning by doing*.

TPI improves training effectiveness by minimizing the use of lectures as a teaching tool. Lectures are replaced with an experiential approach that emphasizes hands-on exercises. Trainers totally involve students in the training process by having them perform the desired behavior, and by reinforcing learning through exercises in which students can

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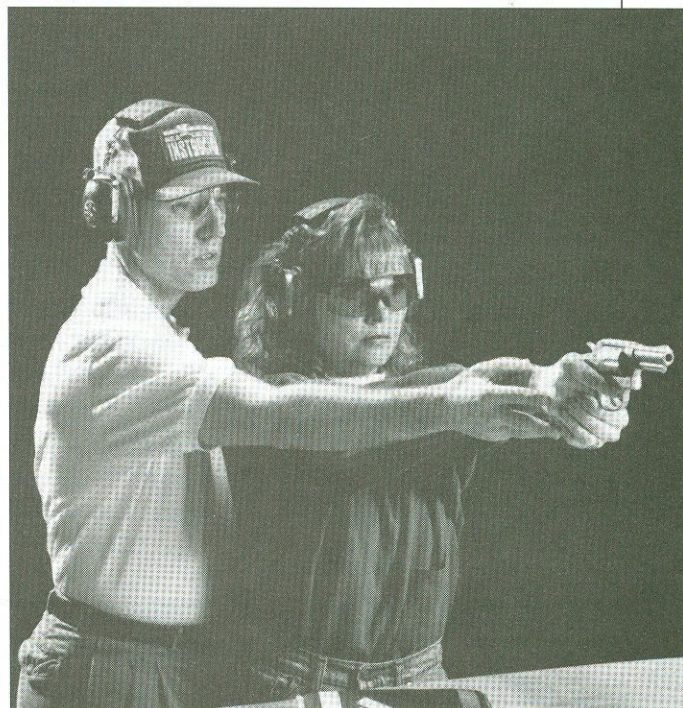


Photo courtesy Smith & Wesson

An NRA Certified Instructor

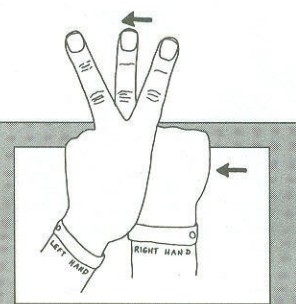
adjusts a student's wrist

position as she practices

dry-firing.

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AT YOUR FINGERTIPS: An Exercise for Proper Sight Adjustment

By Kathie A. Powell

NRA Certified Instructor from Stratford, Conn.



It is very easy to tell your students to move their rear sight in the direction that they want the shots to go on the target. Oftentimes, however, they don't really understand. To make sure my students do understand me, I use my trusty fingers to illustrate this concept to both new and experienced shooters.

Adjusting Elevation

I explain the principle of sight adjustment in two phases. First, I demonstrate adjusting elevation (see Figure A). I have the students do the exercise along with me. We pretend that the index finger of the right hand is the front sight and the first two fingers of the left hand are the rear sight of an imaginary firearm.

They pretend that their "firearm" is stationary and that the shots are high on the target (see Figure A-1). The students simulate moving the rear sight downward by moving the left hand down (see Figure A-2). This demonstrates the principle of moving the rear sight in the direction in which the shooter wants the shots to go on the target.

Following the principle of perfect sight alignment, the students pretend that they are preparing to fire another group of shots. In order to align the sights, the muzzle (front sight) has to be lowered (see Figure A-3). This exercise demonstrates to the students that lowering the muzzle is the direct

result of having moved the rear sight down, which will cause the shot placement to be lowered on the target.

Adjusting Windage

I explain adjusting windage in a similar manner (see Figure B).

The students pretend that their "firearm" is stationary and the shots are to the right of the bullseye (see Figure B-1). They then simulate moving the rear sight to the left, since this is the direction in which they desire their shots to go (see Figure B-2).

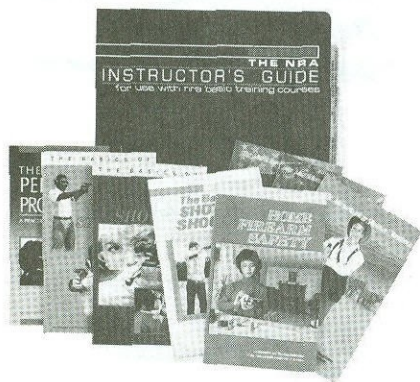
By moving the rear sight to the left, the students have to move the muzzle (front sight) to the left in order to align the sights in preparation for firing the next group of shots (Figure B-3). This demonstrates that moving the muzzle to the left is the direct result of having moved the rear sight to the left, which will cause the shot placement to be moved toward the left on the target.

Additional Pointers

You can then have your students do the exercise by themselves. Or you can have them demonstrate what to do when the shot placement is low on the target and what to do when the shot placement is to the left of the bullseye.

This exercise has worked well in helping all my students understand the principle of sight adjustment. It is also very safe for use in the classroom. I have yet to have a finger "go off" accidentally!

Save Money on Student Texts— Use the Restricted Order Form



Remember that student textbooks for the Basic Firearm Training Program are available at a special discount to NRA Training Counselors, Instructors, and Coaches.

To take advantage of the reduced prices, be sure to use the item number listed on the Restricted Order Form when placing your order. If you do not use the item number on the Restricted Order Form, you will pay the retail price for the textbooks, as listed in the *NRA Member Catalog*.

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If you need a Restricted Order Form (# EF3R0258), call the NRA Sales Department at (800) 336-7402. Provide your instructor ID number with your request.



WANTED: Teaching Tips

We are looking for teaching tips that you have used to help your students understand gun safety and basic marksmanship. We will print one tip in every issue. You will receive \$25 if we publish your tip.

Be sure that each teaching tip you submit supports at least one learning objective of a particular lesson in the Basic Firearm Training Program and conforms to all the rules for safe gun handling and storage.

Send your tips (and any photographs or illustrations) to Editor, NRA Shooting Education Update, National Rifle Association, 1600 Rhode Island Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

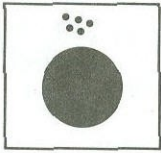


Figure A-1: Two fingers of left hand simulate rear sight. Index finger of right hand simulates front sight. Represents perfect sight alignment.

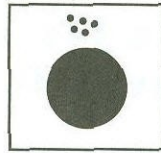


Figure A-2: Keeping right hand stationary, move left hand down to simulate moving rear sight down.

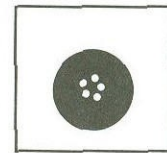


Figure A-3: After the rear sight (left hand) is moved down, realign sights. Thus, right hand moves down to simulate moving muzzle down.



Figure B-1: Two fingers of left hand simulate rear sight. Index finger of right hand simulates front sight. Represents perfect sight alignment.

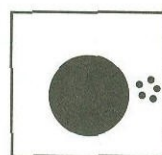
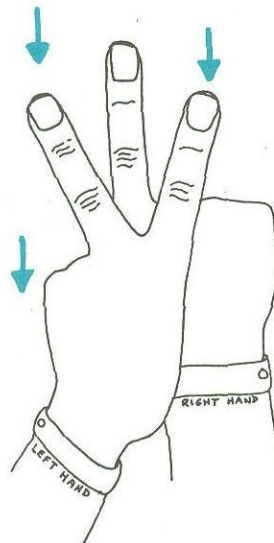


Figure B-2: Keeping right hand stationary, move left hand to the left to simulate moving rear sight to the left.

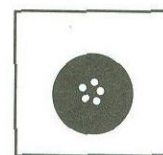
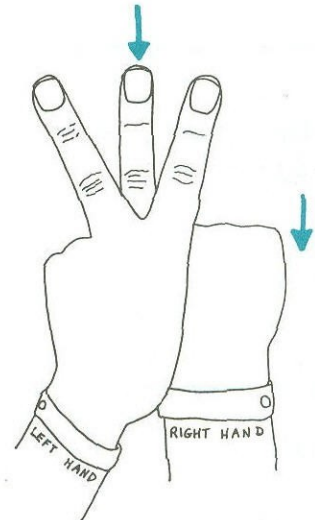


Figure B-3: After the rear sight (left hand) is moved left, realign sights. Thus, right hand moves left to simulate moving muzzle left.

