

THE CASE FOR THE COMBAT GRIP

By Albert Timen

In the last 20 years, throughout my career involvement in Law Enforcement Firearms and Tactical training, I was reminded quite often as I am still today, that basic skills must be honed as a second nature before continuing to focus on to more advanced ones.

While referring to basic shooting skills, such as proper sight alignment and proper trigger manipulation, which seem so basic to the point of minimal need of repetition, I had still witnessed shooters struggling with the effective application of these important basic techniques.

One of the aspects with the least amount of training attention is the way that we grip the handgun in our hands effectively. With the exception of target shooting in competitions and with recreational shooters, I am often referring to shooter that probably needs it the most for personal defense. I am referring to shooters like Police and Law Enforcement officers, as well as Law abiding citizens that carry a handgun lawfully for self defense purpose.

Let's try to understand the importance of the grip and how it plays a significant role in our defensive shooting practice. While we all agree that "you fight as you train", when it comes to reality, we don't have the commodity of making corrections once things go bad. Let's put a scenario in which someone is trying to take the gun away from you, or even worse - trying to kill you! Your entire body will be shaking from adrenaline rush caused by this experience! These are just plain realities that are happening every day unfortunately.

So how we control these things ahead of time?

Once you will learn how to apply a correct grip to your handgun, you already minimized the risk of been disarmed by an attacker, or even worse- killed with your own weapon. You will certainly have to shoot quickly if your life is on the line and it can only be accomplished with a proper grip of your weapon. The grip is the base and one of the most important of shooting fundamentals. It is the key to your cycle of shooting and will determine your end result at the end of this cycle.

The crush grip AKA the "combat grip"

The grip strength breaks down to three different types of grips that the human hand is capable of: the Pinch Grip, the Crush Grip, and the Support Grip.

The crush grip is what most people immediately attribute to grip strength. It is the foundation that the human hand is built on. Hand shaking, swinging a bat or golf club, or holding tight to the subway bars when it stops - it's all crush grip.

Since most of the work in our daily life is done by the hands we tend to misinterpret the right amount of strength needed for our grip to overcome problematic situations.

Training for the crush grip is easier than you think and it is something that can be done almost anywhere throughout the day. Improving your crush grip is relatively easy to feel once you practiced correctly. It also has the advantage of enhancing other aspects of combative skills in self defense disciplines when grip strength is needed.

Once you reach the feeling that your handgun is "crushed" in your hands you will be surprised how much you improved your shooting skills. Any marksmanship expert will tell you that consistency of grasp is a key to consistent accuracy. So once that handgun is drawn from the holster you better make sure you use your combat grip from start to finish and through every shot made.

There are many other attributes to the art of Defensive and Combat Shooting other than grip, but the amount of impact that this specific aspect has on the shooter mindset as well as on tactics of shooting, is one of the most vital ones which can be relatively easy to master.

On the second part of this article coming out with our next issue, I will cover the variety of handgun gripping styles and their pros and cons.

FAST FACT

The precision and force of the hand is controlled by 42 muscles located in the lower arm. The large forces in these muscles are transferred to the hand by tendons that are fixed at various points on three phalanges of the fingers.



Only the smallest manipulative movements of the fingers and the lateral stabilizing of them are performed by muscles actually located in the hands. The hand contains over 17,000 pressure sensitive nerve endings that signal information on the size and shape of the object being touched and held by the hand to the brain.

For great results it's recommend to train your hand grip with:



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