



The Strategies of Low Light Engagements

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This document is a small part of our 5-Day Instructor Level course entitled

“The Strategies of Low Light Engagements”

- formally known as *Prevailing in Low Light Conditions*

This document serves as a small primer for an extremely interesting journey into the world of low light operations. It briefly covers some techniques. It DOES NOT cover the more important foundation of principle that techniques are built upon.

This document is intended as a guideline. Use this document and its concepts at your own risk.

You must have the appropriate training expertise, teaching experience, weapons handling skill to safely implement any live-fire training exercises or programs within your department.

Please check with your departments Rangemaster and/or training officer to ensure compliance with all applicable rules, regulations, laws, and policies.

The author assumes no liability for unsafe conditions, practices, or misunderstanding of this document.

Any questions about this document can be addressed by emailing me at:

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I am currently in the process of collaborating on a book project that will cover in depth the principles, concepts, techniques and training methodologies associated with this particular environment. It will be based on over two decades of low light doctrine development in this challenging niche.

I hope this serves you in some useful capacity.

Enjoy and train smart.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ken Hood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



THE STRATEGIES OF LOW LIGHT ENGAGEMENTS

INSTRUCTOR HANDBOOK

Section #2 – Flashlight Techniques

Flashlight Techniques

Reality Dictates This Skill Requirement

By a substantial percentage, most law enforcement officer-involved shootings occur during the hours from sunset to sunrise, when ambient light is either greatly reduced from normal daytime levels (even when artificial lighting is available) or is virtually nonexistent. Such low-light shootings undoubtedly comprise the majority of non-law enforcement ("citizen") shootings. The obvious reason for this fact; street crime perpetrators are more active after sundown.

Because most shootings occur in low-light conditions, it is not merely desirable for law-enforcement officers (LEOs) to become proficient at shooting with the aid of flashlights - it is absolutely crucial. Being skilled and comfortable at simultaneously operating a firearm and a flashlight enables one to:

- (1) Focus on safely performing the job at hand, rather than become distracted by equipment issues and gear manipulations
- (2) Maintain the proper mindset - confident, controlling, dominating any actual or potential threat

The Simultaneous Use of Hand-held Flashlights and Firearms

Development of Flashlights and Flashlight/Gun Techniques

The first flashlight/gun techniques were designed around "regular" flashlights whose design had remained basically unchanged for half a century. Such lights had thin metal or plastic bodies, and they held a couple of C or D cell batteries, and used a comparatively weak bulb.

Flashlights for law-enforcement and outdoor use were gradually improved, becoming more rugged, reliable, and technologically sophisticated. Long, heavy flashlights (such as the aluminum-bodied Kel-Light of the late 60's and the later Mag-Lite line) became standard law-enforcement tools because, in addition to being comparatively powerful, they could also be used as a weapon or restraint device. Their common use by LEO's encouraged the development of several flashlight/gun techniques.

Flashlight design continued to evolve. Bulb and battery technology and ergonomic considerations resulted first in more powerful beams from "regular" sized lights (like those sold first by Streamlight in the early 70's), and then in more powerful beams from quite small flashlights (like those sold first under the name SureFire by Laser Products in the mid 1980's).

These small hand-held lights, whose bodies are an inch or less in diameter (called small flashlights in this section) are now universally accepted by law-enforcement officers, specialized military units, and outdoorsmen. Although many flashlight/gun techniques that were developed for large flashlights worked equally well with the new small flashlights, some did not, resulting in modifications of the original techniques or the creation of new techniques.

Hardware Considerations

In many self-defense, crime interdiction, or combat conditions occurring in low-light conditions, any flashlight may prove better than no flashlight. Furthermore, a less-than-ideal flashlight may be used in many of the techniques described below.

However, because of the potential deadly situations in which flashlight/gun techniques are employed, it is imperative to use quality flashlights with the proper features and qualities.

They are as follows:

Rugged - This applies to all flashlight components: body, reflector, bulb, and switch. If dropping or banging the light puts it out of order, it is not suitable for LEO or combat use.

Water Resistant - The light may be carried and/or used in the rain. It must not be susceptible to either water infiltration or corrosion from dampness.

Bright - The light will be used to clearly identify targets and/or to temporarily incapacitate an assailant. Traditional 2-D cell flashlights using traditional bulbs, are inadequate sources of light. The beam pattern should be free of dark spots or "holes" We suggest a tool that emits at least 60-65 lumens of light.

Momentary On/Off Switch - Frequently, proper use of flashlights in LEO or combat situations requires activating them for brief moments - sometimes literally a fraction of a second. Ideally this activation should be possible with just the thumb or a single finger.

Therefore:

(1) A flashlight with only a "twist" on/off mechanism is unacceptably slow to operate.

(2) A flashlight with a slide-on/off switch (most of which are not water-resistant) is undesirable, since a positive and rapid on/off cycle is possible only with a thumb.

(3) A flashlight whose momentary switch is integral with its regular on/off switch is undesirable, since accidental activation of the regular switch at the wrong moment could prove disastrous.

Note: It is possible to mitigate this factor by placing the activating fingertip or thumb tip at the perimeter of the on/off button, making it difficult (even virtually impossible) to fully depress the button and lock it on.

(4) A separate momentary switch, operable with one finger or one thumb while holding the flashlight in its normal grip, is by far the best.

Terminology Used in This Section

Low-light conditions can include diminished interior lighting (such as in a darkened building or tunnel), or any outdoors location in heavy shadow (such as in a narrow alley or under a pier); or the complete lack of direct sunlight occurring after sundown.

Flashlight/gun technique includes all techniques for simultaneously using a illumination tool (hand-held or weapon-mounted) and a firearm (handgun or long gun).

Flashlight includes any hand-held, battery-powered illumination device.

Sword grip refers to holding the flashlight as one would a sword handle, with the lens end of the flashlight on the thumb side of the hand, as though the flashlight beam were replacing the sword blade.

Ice-pick grip refers to holding the flashlight as one would an ice pick, with the lens end of the flashlight on the side of the hand opposite the thumb, as though the flashlight beam were replacing the ice pick's pointed shaft.

Hands-together technique refers to any gun/flashlight technique in which the flashlight hand or wrist touches the gun hand or wrist, and an attempt is made to keep them together via pressure or by interlocking wrists or fingers. This is in contrast to hands apart techniques (FBI and neck-index) in which no attempt is made to keep the hands together."

Sympathetic contraction is the term we will use to describe two related physiological phenomena that often occur under stress or startle conditions. First is the contraction of all digits on one hand even though the intention was to contract selected digits. Second is the tendency of both hands (and/or their fingers) to perform similar actions even though the intention was to perform the action with one hand (or the fingers of one hand). This second phenomenon, technically called interlimb interaction, is more apt to occur under startle or stress conditions, and by having hands in close proximity to one another.

Hand confusion refers to the physiological phenomenon in which the wrong hand is activated in a situation where each hand was "assigned" a separate task (such as left hand operates flashlight switch, right hand operates handgun trigger). This phenomenon is also more apt to occur under startle or stress conditions, and by having hands in close proximity to one another.

Beam/grip displacement refers to two things that can occur when a person employing a hands-together flashlight/gun technique fires his weapon, which then recoils. First, the aim of the flashlight beam can be jostled and even significantly redirected off-target by gun recoil.

Second, the position of the gun and flashlight hands can be altered by the recoil, requiring complete re-application of the flashlight/gun technique. All hands-together techniques suffer to some degree from beam/grip displacement. The extent of the displacement will vary according to the size and strength of user's hands, size of flashlight, caliber of handgun, skill in applying technique, and the particular flashlight gun technique used.

Basic Flashlight/Gun Techniques

The proper techniques of moving room to room; clearing rooms; use of cover; confusing, disabling, and dominating opponents with light; avoiding self-illumination, etc. are outside the scope of this particular section. They are best understood and retained through hands-on, live instruction.

Nevertheless, the basic methods of actually holding gun and flashlight for concerted use can easily be grasped through the descriptions below, aided by photographs. We have included the primary recognized techniques. Their strong and weak points are noted in the curriculum.

Most were initially developed or introduced for use with large flashlights. The Rogers/SureFire and the shoulder-fired weapon method were developed with smaller flashlights in mind.

A well-trained shooter should be at least familiar with all of these techniques. Depending on circumstances, each one can have its place. The best way to grasp the positive and negative attributes of each technique is to try it at night or in dark conditions with both large and small flashlights, while shooting live ammunition.

Keep in mind that while a "static test" of the technique (above) is certainly useful, the true value and applicability of each technique cannot be completely understood and evaluated until it is used under conditions closely approximating actual search, house clearing, SWAT, or combat conditions. Under such conditions, stress, fatigue, corners, obstacles, and flashlight features will all have a significant effect.

A Warning About Hands-Together Flashlight/Gun Techniques

When a flashlight is activated in a low light situation there is an almost irresistible urge -- made stronger under stressful conditions -- to move the brightest part of the beam so that it shines on the perceived point of danger or into a potential assailant's face. But in all hands-together techniques, because the user's hands are locked or pressed together, redirecting the beam also redirects the barrel of the gun. At a few yards distance even a moderate adjustment of the flashlight beam can turn a perfect center-mass aim into a complete miss. Taking one's eyes off the assailant to re-align the gun is dangerous, and may well move the flashlight's central bright spot off the target again, starting the process over.

Thus, it is imperative to be aware of this phenomenon and train accordingly. Two ways simplify this training:

(1) When directing your locked-together flashlight and gun hands toward a potential target, or when sweeping them during a search, remember that the gun hand is the master hand. It's the driver, and the flashlight hand is "along for the ride", so to speak.

(2) Adopt the mentality that, when the flashlight is activated, what you see is what you get. That is, be prepared to shoot with whatever part of the beam happens to be on the target. Don't get in the habit of trying to achieve a perfect "spotlight" view of the target every time you switch on the light. Instead, pay attention to where the gun is aiming. In a situation where a split-second could mean the difference between life and death, gun alignment matters most.

FBI Technique

Description

Flashlight is held in sword or ice pick grip, with arm extended well away from the body (and extended upward if desired), with lens of flashlight held slightly in front of body to avoid illuminating the user. Weapon is held in any position desired, out of contact with flashlight hand or arm.

History

"This is probably the oldest formally taught flashlight/gun technique. This technique was originally emphasized as a way to prevent the user's flashlight from "marking" his exact position when activated. By moving the light away from the user's body, an assailant who simply shot at the light source would be less likely to automatically hit the user."

Some disparage this technique as outmoded. Advocates of specific hands-together techniques generally express this view. All techniques listed in this curriculum have their own positive attributes as well as obvious deficiencies. The fact is, a relaxed, movement oriented, unstructured version of the FBI technique, employed with proper cover, is extremely useful in room-clearing tactics and in dynamic firefight situations.

Positive attributes

- Works with small or large flashlights.
- No beam/grip displacement upon discharge of weapon.
- Separation of hands reduces chance of sympathetic contraction and hand confusion.
- Enables searching with flashlight without aiming weapon wherever one looks.
- Peripheral light can illuminate front and rear sights of weapon if desired.
- Alignment of flashlight beam with target has no effect on alignment of weapon with target, and vice versa.
- Allows minimal exposure of user's body during room clearing or firing around obstacles.
- Original purpose of masking precise location of shooter still valid, though limited by ambient conditions such as reflective walls.
- Transitions well to the "Neck Index Technique" .
- If a smaller flashlight is being used, this technique can be used with light weight shoulder-fired weapons and transitions well to SFI shoulder-fired weapon technique.
- Supports the principle of "Light and Move" and can be extremely deceptive if utilized properly.
- Easy to use bilaterally

Negatives attributes

- User must shoot one-handed.
- Can be difficult to maintain alignment
- Fatiguing if performed steadily for more than a few moments, especially with large flashlights.
- Difficult to use with injured hand or arm.
- Precise, instant alignment of flashlight beam with target requires practice.

FBI Technique



Neck-Index Technique

Description

The flashlight is held in ice-pick grip. Thumb or any finger placed on the on-off (or momentary) switch. For large flashlights, the flashlight body is rested on the shoulder, indexed against the base of the neck. For small flashlights, the body of the flashlight (or the fist holding it) is held indexed against the jaw/neck juncture just below the ear, so that it moves in conjunction with user's head yet blocks little peripheral vision. Weapon is held in any position desired, out of contact with flashlight hand or arm.

History of technique

First published description of this technique appeared in a June 1994 Handguns Magazine article by Brian Puckett, and therefore it is sometimes called the Puckett technique. However, the small flashlight version of this technique was taught by Ken Good and Dave Maynard of Combative Concepts, Inc. about two years prior to the '94 article. Puckett and Good now use the term "neck-index technique".

While it was common for police officers to hold large flashlights in a similar manner during casual use or during extended searches, this technique (1) utilized the ergonomic, tactical, and even psychological benefits provided by this common, comfortable grip, and (2) broke from the long trend of hands-together flashlight/gun techniques. The goal of hands-together techniques is to steady the shooting hand and/or keep the flashlight beam constantly aligned with the gun barrel. Good and Maynard's dynamic combat techniques did not require this, and Puckett questioned the overall desirability of it. To quote from the latter's original article:

"No standard gun/flashlight technique provides a firm, two-hand hold on the weapon. Instead of attempting to dodge this fact through complex, unnatural or unsuitable approximations of a two-hand hold - making the cure worse than the disease - the better course is to accept the one-handedness of the weapon hold. Do not make it a liability, make the best of it."

Positive attributes

- Clearly illumination of sights and the target simultaneously.
- Natural transition from FBI technique.
- Works with small or large flashlights.
- For large flashlights, weight is borne almost entirely by the user's body, enabling extended use
- No beam/grip displacement upon discharge of weapon.
- Separation of hands reduces chance of sympathetic contraction and hand confusion.
- Enables searching with flashlight independently of weapon point of aim if required.
- Alignment of flashlight beam with target has no effect on alignment of weapon with target
- Flashlight is held in "cocked" position for defensive purposes if required.
- Usable with injured hand or arm, as it virtually duplicates natural "flipper" position of wounded limb.
- Supports an aligned body position for movement in any direction.
- For ambidextrous operators - excellent for lateral movement (moving left, flashlight left side, handgun right hand -- moving right flashlight right, handgun left hand).
- Can be easily transitioned to light forward, weapon back for weapon retention in close quarters.
- Supports "Power with Light" Principle
- Easy to use bilaterally

Negative attributes

- User must shoot one-handed.
- Can create excess "splash" of light off rear of weapon if not familiar with technique.
- Light is located near the head - All threats need to be accounted for.
- Use of this technique with larger flashlights can easily lead to a strike to an incoming threat's head/face if deployed in a less-lethal situation. The flashlight is naturally poised to strike.

Neck-Index Technique



Note: Flashlight in this photo is held a bit higher and a bit forward of the “optimal position”. If you know your terrain at your side is clear, than this position is acceptable. Just realize your peripheral vision is being blocked. See next page for optimal flashlight placement.

Transition - Neck Index

The Bilateral Transfer

As described by Ernest G. Langdon, 2-time IDPA national champion and Strategos International adjunct instructor.

This technique is the same from either side.

Start by rotating the index finger around the flashlight so that the flashlight is held by the remaining three fingers. The web of the hand between the index finger and the thumb should now be exposed.

Note: The trigger finger is straight before the technique is started.

The grip on the pistol is relaxed slightly to expose the back-strap area of the pistol. Note that the thumb is still around the grip maintaining control of the pistol.

The flashlight hand now is inserted in the exposed back-strap area. Using the web of the hand and pinching with the thumb, control of the pistol is taken by the flashlight hand.

Now that control of the pistol has been transferred to the other hand, the grip that was on the pistol can be released and that hand moved to a position just below and in front of the flashlight.

Now the three fingers that are holding the flashlight are relaxed allowing the other hand to take control of the light.

The transfer is now complete.

This technique is easy to commit to the sub-conscious, once mastered.





As seen from the opposite side

Harries Technique

Description

Flashlight is held in ice-pick grip (lens on side opposite the thumb). Thumb or any finger operates on/off (or momentary) switch. Wrists nest together and backs of hands are firmly pressed together to create stabilizing isometric tension. For large flashlights, body of flashlight may be rested on weapon hand's forearm.

History

This technique is named after Michael Harries, a pioneer of modern practical combat shooting. Developed in the early 1970's for use with large flashlights, this technique is widely used and is well-suited to small flashlights.

Positive attributes

- Works with small or large flashlights.
- Keeps flashlight beam automatically aligned with weapon barrel.
- Enables steadier, two-hand support of weapon prior to shooting.
- For large flashlights, flashlight body can sometimes be rested on weapon hand's forearm, enabling extended use.

Negative attributes

- User may suffer beam/grip displacement during discharge of weapon.
- Keeping flashlight beam aligned with weapon barrel leads to fatigue due to the tension created by keeping the back of hands together. Note the lower hand has a tendency to rotate downward when the handgun is in a "guard" or "low ready" position.
- Proximity of hands increases chance of sympathetic contraction and hand confusion.
- During hasty execution, weapon muzzle can cross flashlight hand or arm
- Can lead to "Self-Blinding" - I.E. right handed shooter attempting to navigate a corner, wall on right side. Hot spot of the beam will "drag" behind the weapon. If the light is activated, the reflected light will be directed back to the shooter. This not only substantially reduces the shooters vision but also silhouettes the shooter and other team members to all threats in the area.
- Light is located center of mass, if unseen threats engage the light your body is directly in the line of fire.

Harries Technique



Hargreaves “Lite Touch” Technique

Description

Flashlight held in the palm of the support hand. Method of deployment, draw Pistol, and flash light together, punch pistol forward, straight line at target, weak hand pointing flash light, as you would a fencing foil. The two hands come together, just like a two hand punch draw, but the weak hand is under the pistol, on/off button pressed against the knuckles of the gun hand.

History

Named after Mike Hargreaves, former British Army, bouncer at Cavern club Liverpool U.K. ('60-'64), full-time firearms instructor for 20 years and board member for IALEFI for the past 16 years.

Mr. Hargreaves introduced this technique to the our staff early 2002.

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Positive attributes

- Simple, effective, easy to learn, and is a gross motor skill
- Keeps flashlight beam automatically aligned with weapon barrel.
- Enables steadier, two-hand support of weapon prior to shooting.

Negative attributes

- Does not work with side-switch flashlights.
- Difficult to use with injured hand or arm.
- Light is located center of mass, if unseen threats engage the light your body is directly in the line of fire.

Hargreaves “Lite Touch” Technique



Chapman Technique

Description

Flashlight held in sword grip, but only with thumb and forefinger. Thumb or one finger operates the on/off (or momentary) switch. The other three fingers of the flashlight hand wrap around the gripping fingers of the weapon hand, in an approximation of a regular two-hand handgun grip, and arms provide stabilizing isometric tension.

History

Named for Ray Chapman, founder of the Chapman Academy and world-class shooter. This technique was perhaps the second formally taught and recognized technique. It is also credited to Bill Rogers, and is sometimes identified as the Chapman/Rogers technique.

Positive attributes

- Works with small or large flashlights.
- Keeps flashlight beam automatically aligned with weapon barrel.
- Enables steadier, two-hand support of weapon prior to shooting.

Negative attributes

- Works only with side-switch flashlights.
- Difficult to perform for those with small hands or with a heavy flashlight.
- User may suffer beam/grip displacement during discharge of weapon.
- Fatiguing if performed steadily for more than a few moments, especially with large flashlights.
- Proximity of hands increases chance of sympathetic contraction and hand confusion.
- Weapon can bang into flashlight during hasty execution.
- Difficult to use with injured hand or arm.
- Attempted alignment of flashlight beam with target can alter alignment of weapon with target, and vice versa.
- Light is located center of mass, if unseen threats engage the light your body is directly in the line of fire.

Chapman Technique



Keller Technique

Description

Flashlight is held in a sword grip, with the thumb on the on/off (or momentary) switch. Arms are extended outward, with arm of weapon hand below arm of flashlight hand. Wrists nest together and back of weapon hand presses firmly against back of flashlight hand to create stabilizing tension.

Note: This technique must be practiced to create muscle memory in order to avoid having the slide of the handgun slam into wrist or forearm during discharge, especially when the arms aren't fully extended.

History

Named for Georgia State Police trooper Van Keller, this technique has been described as a variation of the Harries technique. However, it is quite distinct.

Positive attributes

- Keeps flashlight beam fairly well aligned with gun barrel.
- Enables steadier, two-hand support of weapon prior to shooting.

Negative attributes

- Works only with side-switch flashlights.
- User may suffer beam/grip displacement during discharge of weapon.
- Fatiguing if performed steadily over time, especially with large flashlights.
- Proximity of hands increases chance of sympathetic contraction and hand confusion.
- Difficult to use with injured hand or arm.
- Precise, rapid alignment of flashlight beam with target requires practice.
- Attempted alignment of flashlight beam with target can alter alignment of weapon with target, and vice versa.
- Light is located center of mass, if unseen threats engage the light your body is directly in the line of fire.

Keller Technique



USMC Technique

Description

Flashlight is held in sword grip with thumb or finger on the side-mounted on/off (or momentary) switch. The rim of the flashlight lens is pressed forward against the tips of the weapon hand's gripping fingers (even locking them in place if the rim is deep enough) creating a stabilizing tension.

History

Development of this technique is attributed to U.S. Marine Corps' embassy guards.

Positive attributes

- Can be surprisingly comfortable and stable, even with large flashlights.
- Keeps flashlight beam well aligned with gun barrel.
- Enables steadier, two-hand support of weapon prior to shooting.

Negatives attributes

- Works only with side-switch flashlights with fairly large lenses.
- User may suffer beam/grip displacement during discharge of weapon.
- Proximity of hands increases chance of sympathetic contraction and hand confusion.
- Attempted alignment of flashlight beam with target can alter alignment of weapon with target, and vice versa.
- Light is located center of mass, if unseen threats engage the light your body is directly in the line of fire.

USMC Technique



Ayoob Technique

Description

Flashlight is grasped in sword grip, thumb or any finger on the side-mounted on/off (or momentary) switch. The thumb of the flashlight hand is pressed against the thumb of the weapon hand, creating isometric tension that steadies the weapon. The hands may be held near the body or the arms may be extended.

A variation on this technique calls for the thumb of the flashlight hand to be pressed inward just below, but still in contact with, the weapon hand's thumb, thus somewhat lowering the angle of the flashlight beam. Another variation calls for pressing the fingers of the flashlight hand against the fingers of the weapon hand, which significantly reduces the amount of wrist rotation required.

History

Named for Massad Ayoob, law enforcement officer, prolific writer, and martial arts/shooting instructor. Practicing this technique will emphasize the fact that it is best suited for a quick - even unprepared - response to a nearby threat. It is less suited for search mode, for prolonged operations such as room-clearing, or for shooting at assailants beyond a distance of a few feet.

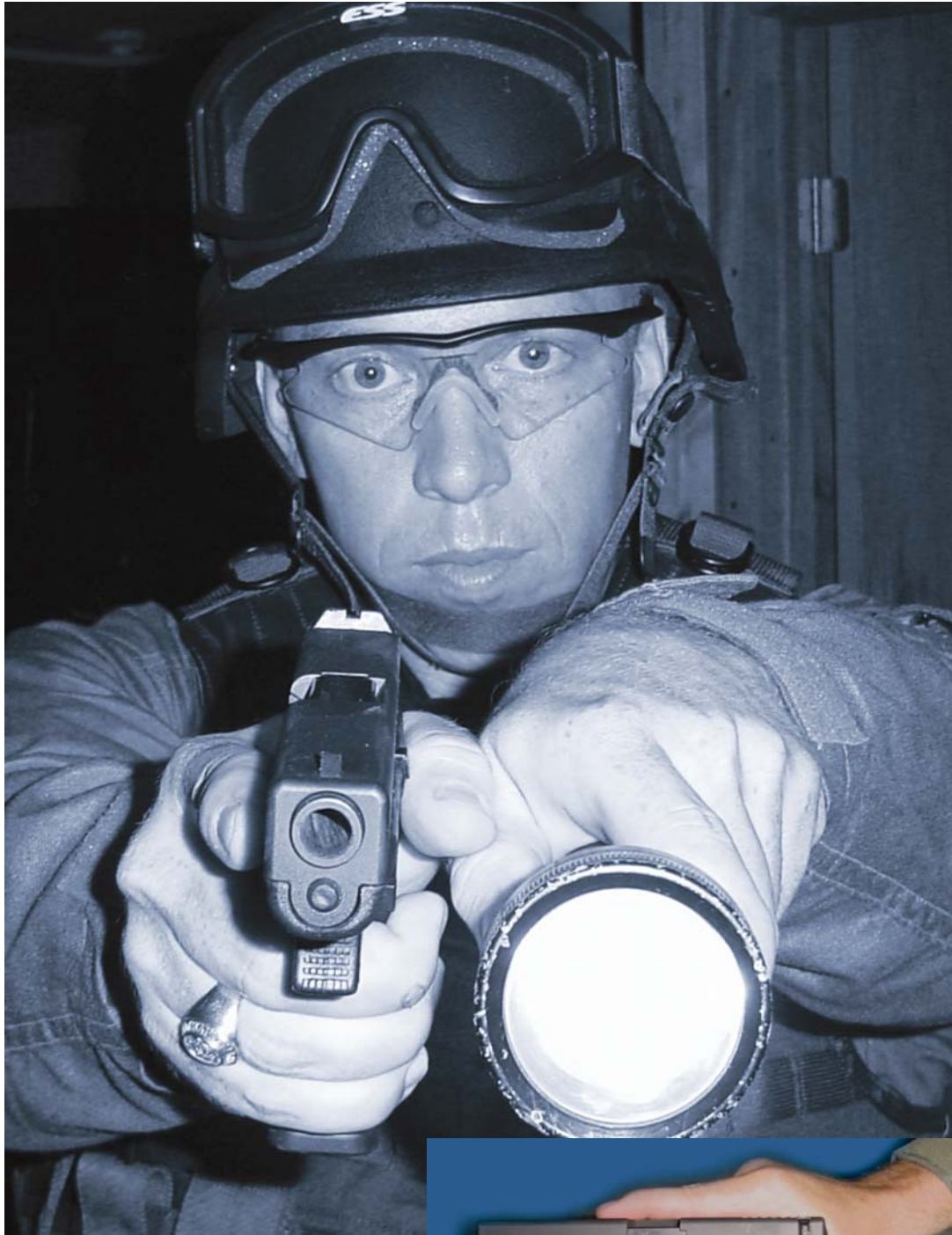
Positive attributes

- Can be assumed from "normal" (sword) grip on flashlight with quick gross motor movements.
- At very close range (no more than about three yards) the flashlight beam is automatically directed into assailant's eyes.
- Flashlight can be held fairly close to body, reducing chance of loss due to assailant or accidental contact with objects.

Negative attributes

- Works only with side-switch flashlights.
- User may suffer beam/grip displacement during discharge of weapon.
- Fatiguing if performed steadily for more than a few moments, especially with large flashlights.
- Proximity of hands increases chance of sympathetic contraction and hand confusion.
- Weapon tends to bang into flashlight during execution.
- Attempted alignment of flashlight beam with target can alter alignment of weapon with target, and vice versa.
- Light is located center of mass, if unseen threats engage the light your body is directly in the line of fire.

Ayoob Technique



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Over/Under Technique

Description

Flashlight is held in sword grip with thumb or a finger on the side-mounted on/off (or momentary) switch. Weapon hand is pressed down firmly on top of flashlight hand or flashlight body, creating isometric tension to steady the weapon.

History

Also called the "stack" or "New York" technique. Little information was found on the origin of this technique, though the name suggests it might have originated with the New York City Police Department.

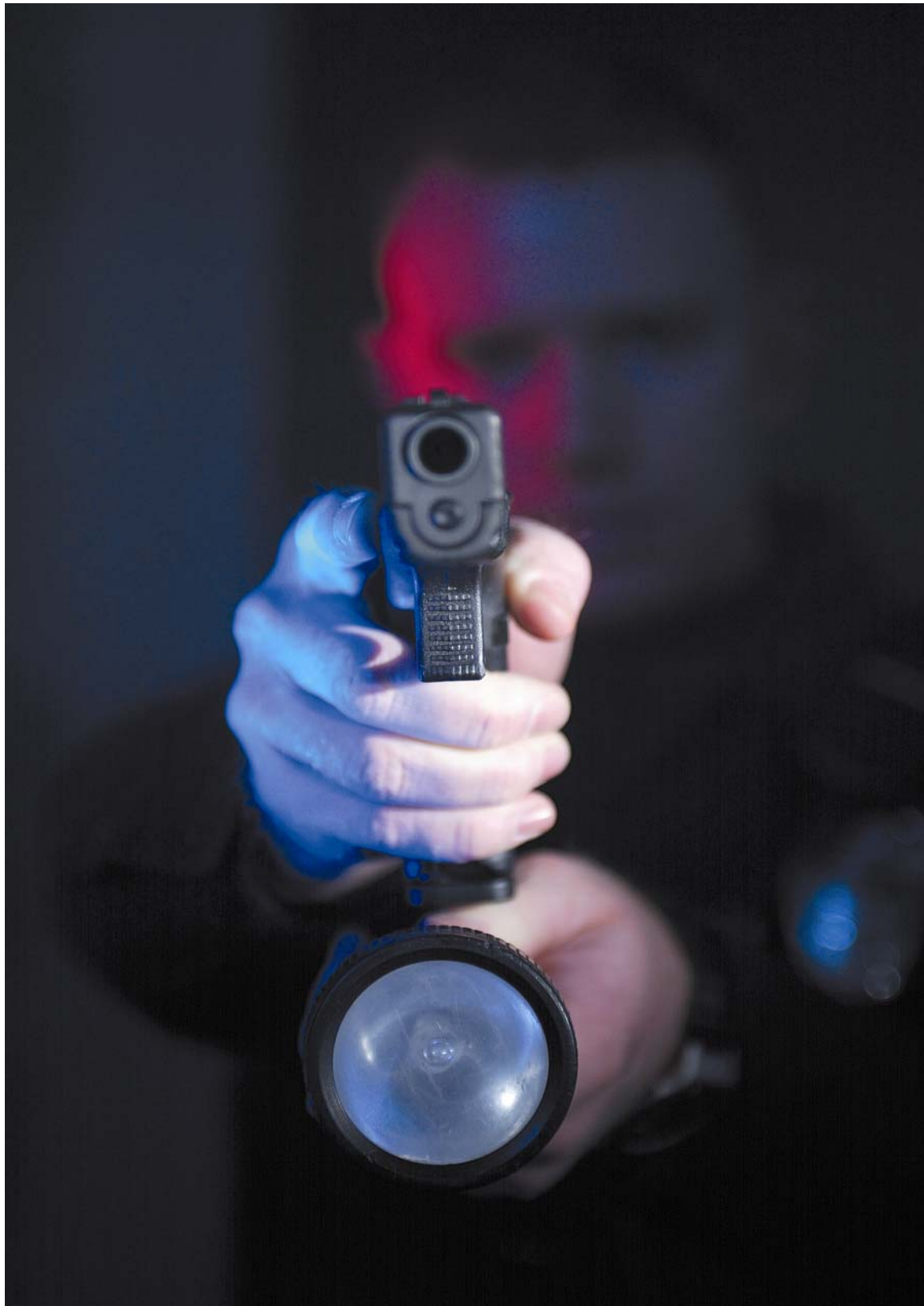
Positive attributes

- Works with small or large flashlights.
- Keeps flashlight beam well aligned with gun barrel.
- Enables steadier, two-hand support of weapon prior to shooting.
- Fairly usable with injured hand or arm.

Negatives attributes

- Works only with side-switch flashlights.
- User may suffer beam/grip displacement during discharge of weapon.
- Proximity of hands increases chance of sympathetic contraction and hand confusion.
- Attempted alignment of flashlight beam with target can alter alignment of weapon with target, and vice versa.
- Light is located center of mass, if unseen threats engage the light your body is directly in the line of fire.

Over/Under Technique



Rogers/SureFire Technique

Description

Small SureFire light is held between forefinger and middle finger in a "syringe" grip, that is, with these fingers gripping the body of the flashlight (and in front of the integral rubber ring, if the flashlight has one). Lens of light faces outward, and the protruding momentary switch rests against the middle or lower part of the thumb. Flashlight is activated by squeezing it between fingers and thumb. The weapon hand is brought together with the flashlight hand, as though performing a normal two-hand hold, and the lower fingers of the flashlight hand are wrapped around the gripping fingers of the weapon hand. Isometric tension is applied with the arms to steady the weapon.

Note: some people find that wrapping just the bottom two fingers (ring and little) of the flashlight hand around the gun-gripping fingers improves alignment of flashlight beam with gun barrel. However, quickly assuming this particular grip requires more practice.

History

Named for former FBI agent William Rogers. Andy Stanford writes that Rogers developed the technique around the original Laser Products 6P flashlight, which had neither a gripping ring nor a protruding momentary switch. The technique is easier to employ using the SureFire "Combat" series of flashlights, which have both of these features.

Positive attributes

- Keeps flashlight beam well aligned with gun barrel.
- Enables steadier, two-hand support of weapon prior to shooting.
- Very little serious beam/grip displacement if properly executed.
- Efficient draw when carried with the SureFire proprietary holsters and other flashlight holsters designed to carry the flashlight lens down.

Negatives attributes

- Works well only with small flashlights with end-mounted momentary switches.
- Proximity of hands increases chance of sympathetic contraction and hand confusion.
- Difficult to use with injured hand.
- Attempted alignment of flashlight beam with target can alter alignment of weapon with target, and vice versa.
- Light is located center of mass, if unseen threats engage the light your body is directly in the line of fire.

Rogers/SureFire Technique



Shoulder-Fired Weapon Technique

Description

Flashlight is held in sword or ice pick grip, with arm extended well away from the body (and extended upward if desired), with lens of flashlight held slightly in front of body to avoid illuminating the user. (Mirroring the FBI Technique) This technique revolves around using a handheld flashlight in conjunction with a lightweight shoulder fired weapon equipped with a weapon mounted light (I.E. M4, MP5, shorter semi-auto shotguns). With extended practice, larger weapons can be utilized.

The handheld flashlight is employed as a search tool. Once the target of interest is located, the flashlight can be rolled under the forearm of the shoulder-fired weapon, it is held in place with the last two fingers of the support hand, lens now facing the shooter.

The WeaponLight can now be activated at will with the remaining fingers. Worst case, simply drop the handheld and use the activation pad located on the WeaponLight.

History of technique

Developed as a result of years of Force-on-Force training in low-light environments at Fleet Training Center San Diego and with Combative Concepts Inc. a private company founded by former Navy SEALs Dave Maynard and Ken J. Good. Constantly dealing with large number of adversaries in unknown locations lead to the more deceptive practice of searching with a handheld flashlight well above the head, even with a shoulder-fired weapon with a dedicated WeaponLight attached. Threats can and will shoot at the flashlight giving away their location. Additionally, "holding" a hallway or stairway with just the WeaponLight creates too static of a picture for threats to interpret and allows them to develop a simple firing solution. Use of a handheld while in the "holding" pattern, allows the operator to rapidly change the light picture without rapidly moving the weapon.

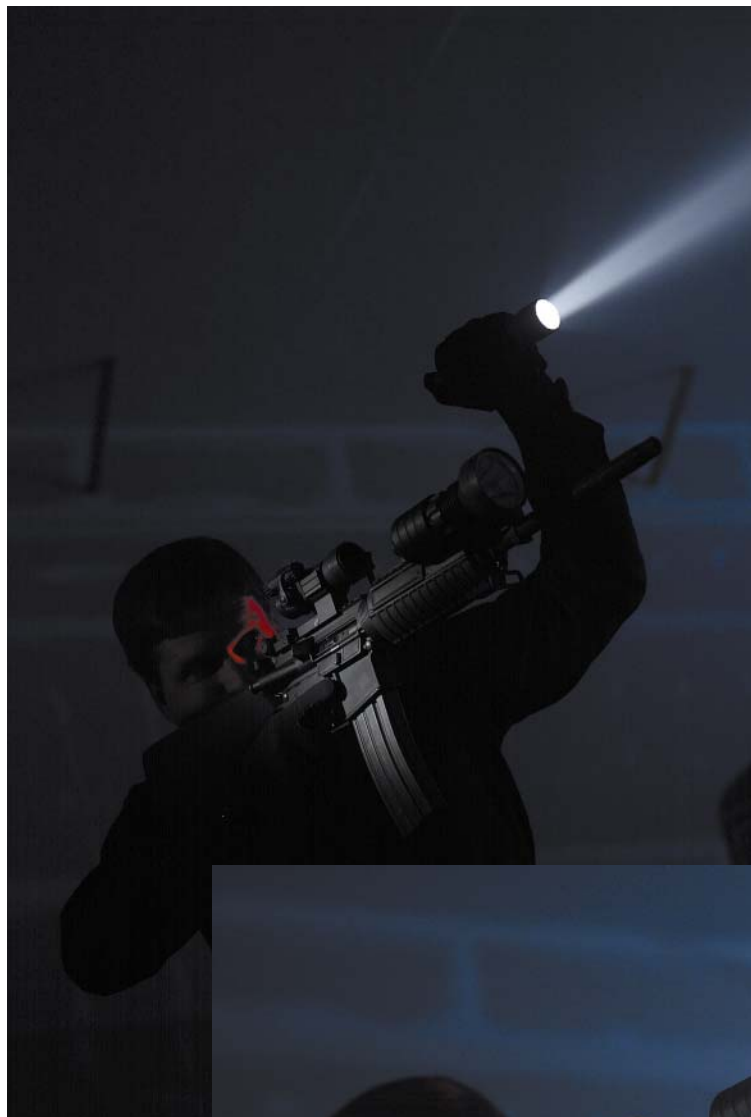
Positive attributes

- Allows for extremely deceptive light picture downrange. Threats tend to shoot overhead in longer distance open areas as well as close quarters.
- Shooter can hold hallways at corners in a low kneeling position, but illuminate from the threats point of view at chest/head high.
- Light can be used as communication tool to direct team members to threat locations without taking weapon off primary field of fire.
- Light can be rapid moved while searching open areas without "flagging" team members with your weapon.
- Can still activate WeaponLight

Negative attributes

- Not a basic technique - requires extensive practice to operationally deploy.
- User must be able to shoot a lightweight shoulder fired weapon one-handed in close quarters.

Shoulder-Fired Weapon Technique





THE STRATEGIES OF LOW LIGHT ENGAGEMENTS INSTRUCTOR HANDBOOK

Section #3 – Live-Fire Shooting Drills – Partial List
Force-on-Force Drilling not Included in this Primer

Box Drills

All drills should be explained, demonstrated by the instructor staff then dry-fired by the students. Allow time for questions and refinements. Initially live-fire should be done at slow speeds and only fired in shorter time frames as skill and proficiency naturally increases.

These are not drills for beginning shooters. These drills should only be attempted by those completely familiar with the fundamentals of firearms safety, range safety, and marksmanship.

In order to inculcate the ability to naturally move when presented with a close quarter engagement, the first drill used is the **Box Drill**.

The shooter simply lines up with the target placed at a distance that the shooter can confidently hit with ease, two-handed strong. The use of high-quality steel targets is preferred. These types of targets provide instant feedback and save a tremendous amount of time because there is no need to go forward, score and paste. Body armor is highly recommended.

Initially the drill is done "Dry". The command is given to move in a particular direction. Check for proper body mechanics, weapons handling, holstering procedures, and general comprehension.

Right, Left, Forward, Back, Down, Up.

If the line of shooters gets misaligned, simply issue the command, "Back to the Box". This means all shooters should return to the center, indexed on their target.

1. Horizontal Displacements

Start off with 2-handed Strong using only horizontal direction changes until the drill can be safely conducted.

2. Horizontal & Vertical Displacements

Then start varying the routine. Have the shooters fire from standing, kneeling, and modified prone. I.E. – Stand-by, Right, Down, Down, Up, Up, Up, Left. This command sequence would bring the shooter to the right in standing position, then down from there to kneeling, down again to the modified prone, up to the kneeling, up to standing, left back to the original starting position.

3. Horizontal & Vertical Displacements with other shooting positions

Then next step is to continue horizontal and vertical displacements using the following shooting positions: 2-handed Weak - 1-handed Strong - 1-handed Weak

4. Transitions

A variation of this drill is to continue issuing movement commands, but add the command, transition. This transition is the opposite side of the body. Continue to include a combination of movement and transitioning until the shooter is fluent.

5. With a Handheld Flashlight

Continue the 'Box Drills' 1-4 with the addition of a handheld flashlight. Go through the matrix of flashlight techniques.

- Do all the drills in well-lit conditions.
- Do all the drills in low-light conditions.

Skills & Considerations:

Given all the possible combinations, there is plenty of work to do in this drill in and of itself. You can also add pivots into the mix by starting the shooter out in a given direction.

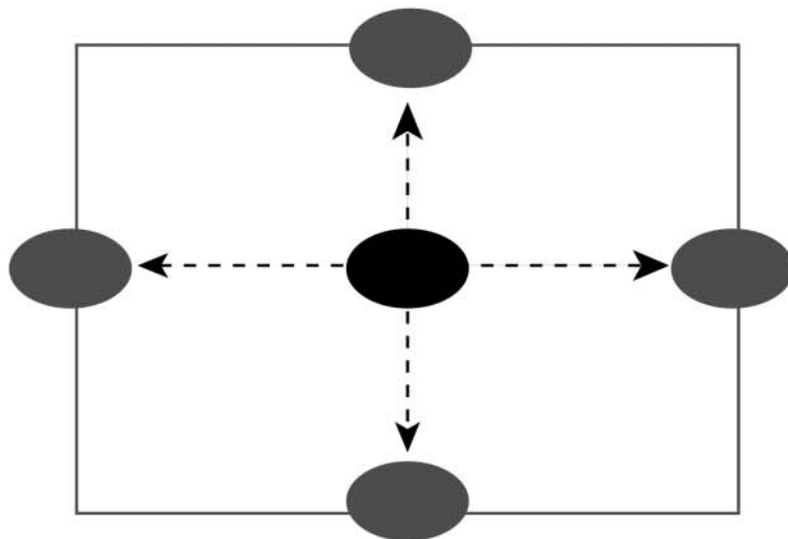
Safety Issues:

Start slowly and then carefully work your student up to the more complex motor skills.

Shooting Platform

Box Drill

X



Lateral Slides

Again make the firing line relatively close to the targets in order to establish a positive baseline. Have the entire class move to one side of the line, inline behind the on-deck circle.

The first shooter draws a weapon in a safe direction and faces the opposite flank, weapon facing the targets (4-8 targets on the line). On the command, "On You", the shooter starts sliding down the firing line, weapon always pointing toward the targets if safe to do so.

When faced with a target, the shooter engages with a 2-rounds and moves to the next target. Each target presents a new threat, so it should be engaged from a ready position.

When the shooter engages the last available target, the shooter should move slightly outboard of that target, place their weapon in the condition they want it to be in, holster up and clear the immediate area. The shooter should stand by to move back in the opposite direction. Once all the shooters have arrived on the other side, dropped magazines can be retrieved when the lead instructor indicates it is clear to do so.

Skill & Considerations:

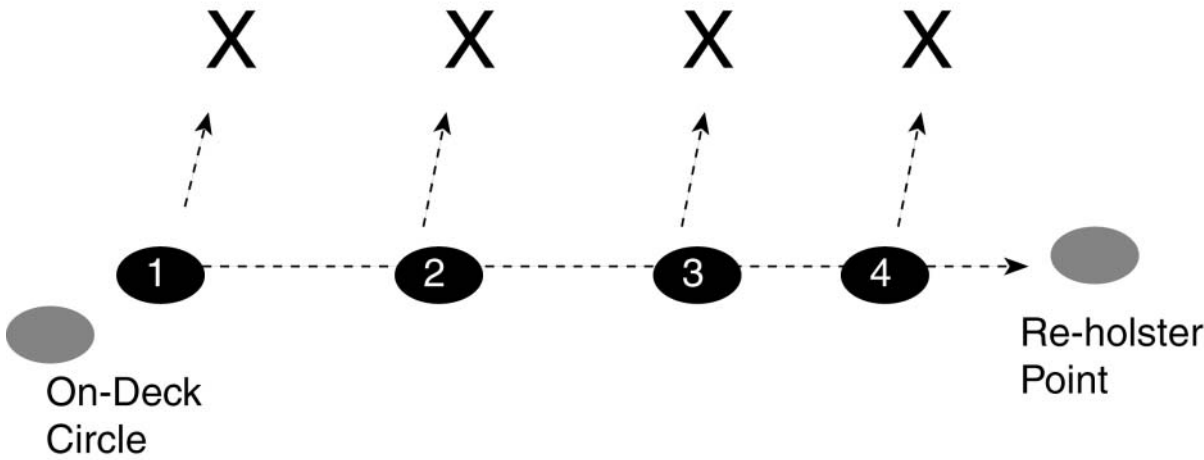
- The drills develops the ability to move and shoot accurately, supports the development of the "Neck Index" flashlight technique, and opens up several tactical options in during close quarter combat.
- The shooters should be "pulling" themselves along the ground, attempting to glide along the ground and any uneven terrain. This drill reinforces the need for the lower body to absorb shock and elevation changes while simultaneously keeping the weapon/sights on the target.
- The shooters should not stop or slow down to engage the targets
- The shooters should not stop to reload or clear malfunctions. Move, move, move
- Have you shooters use 2-hands, 1-hand, various flashlight techniques
- Work in the day first, and then transition to night drilling.

Safety Issues:

- Shooters should initially move at 1/2 speed. Pace increases as skill level increases
- Shooters should not engage targets at angles greater than 30 degrees either side of the target.
- In the beginning stages of this drill have an instructor walk the entire way with the shooter.
- Once the shooters have demonstrated safety and proficiency, you can stage an instructor on each end and the middle of the line to simply monitor movements.
- Clearing malfunctions on the move, some officers will neglect proper muzzle direction and trigger finger control. Be extremely aware of this potential safety hazard.
- Ensure all shooters are accounted for before starting the drill in the opposite direction.
- Closely monitor weapons handling during the reload, re-holstering process.

Shooting Platform

Solo - Lateral Movement



5-Levels of Focus

This drill is designed to develop the shooter's "inner stopwatch".

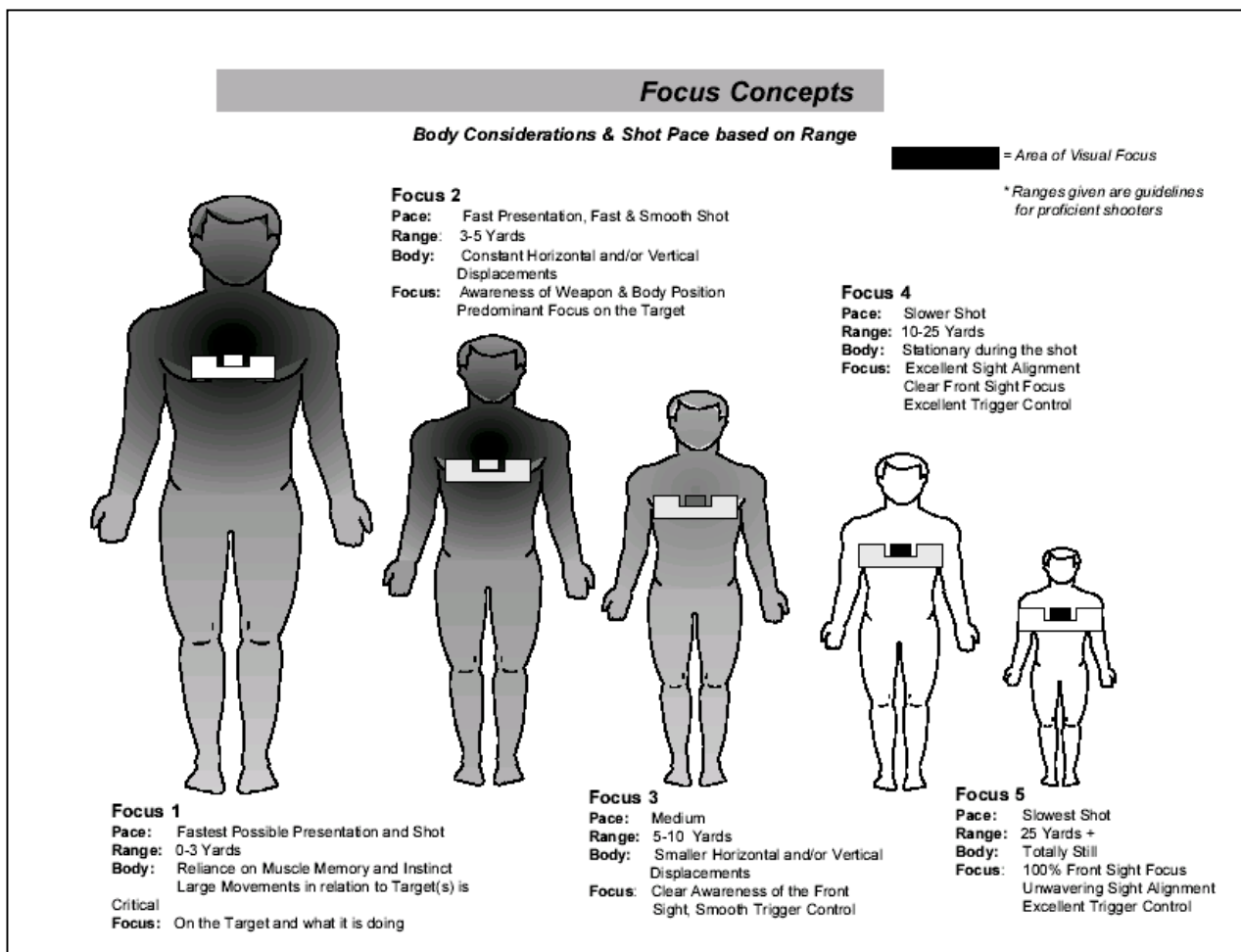
A shooter should subconsciously know how much time is required to accurately hit a target center of mass or head at any given range that the weapon can be effectively deployed.

The diagram illustrated on the opposite page is a good template for most reasonably skilled shooters using a handgun.

Targets are arranged in a narrow cone in front of the shooter. Some of the longer-range targets should be partially obscured in order to force a position change by the shooter.

The next shooter in the line randomly calls out target sequences. (i.e. 1, 3, 4.)

Any time the number one target is called out, the shooter must horizontally and/or vertically displace in order to learn to vacate space. On a 5, 2, 1 call, the shooter rhythm should be noticeably changing. #5 should be 100% front sight focus, #2 a softer focus, #1 a fast position change then two round fired at an extremely fast pace.



Guidelines:

2 rounds per target call

Fire 2-3 magazines, let the next shooter in the line fire the drill.

Cycle through the drill:

- 2-handed Strong
- 2-handed Weak
- 1-handed Strong
- 1-handed Weak
- Fire a pair strong side, transition - Fire a pair weak side
- Drill in conjunction with a handheld flashlight using different flashlight techniques
- Fire during the Day
- Fire at Night

Skills & Considerations:

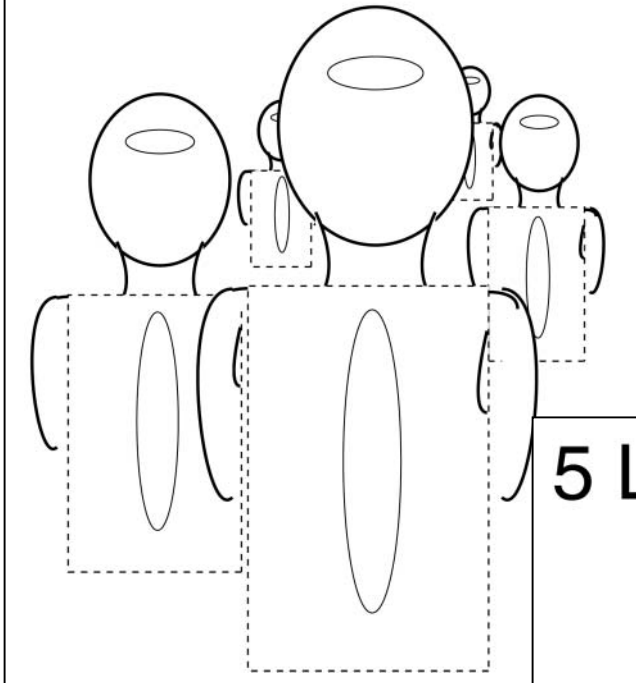
- The ability to move and shoot accurately.
- Building the “internal clock”
- This drill helps develop proper visual and kinesthetic awareness. Shooters need to automatically select the correct focus for the shot based on distance, target size, and time.

Safety Issues:

- First target should not be a steel target. It should be a paper target to avoid excessive back splash from bullet fragmentation. If students are going to vertically displace on this target, ensure that the target is low enough or the backstop is high enough to stop the bullet(s) from leaving the confines of the range.

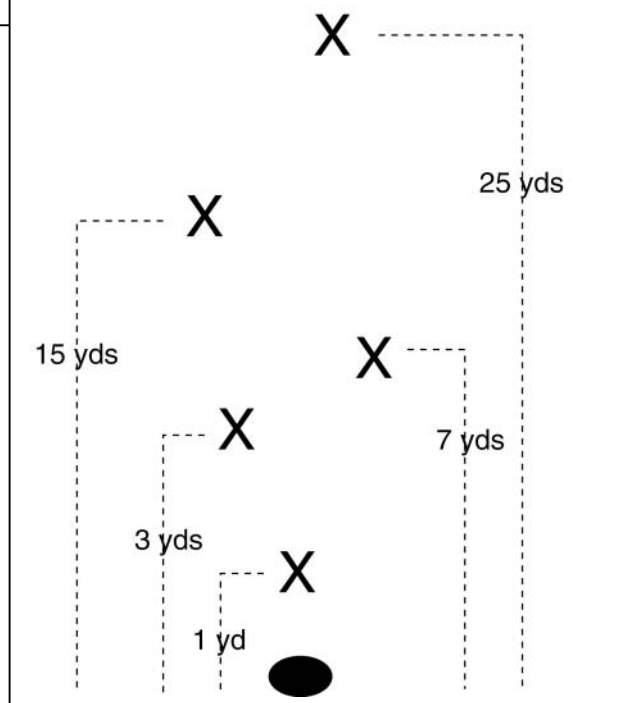
5 Levels of Focus

Front View



5 Levels of Focus

Top View



Shooting Platform – Target Engagement while Moving Forward - Solo

Oftentimes you need to move forward in a confrontation. During this movement you need to pay attention to the surroundings around you, as well as have the ability to accurately engage targets on the move at the closer ranges. This drill is designed to bring these skills to the forefront.

Shooter starts off the #1 target. The shooter is given the command, “On You” and leaves the starting point whenever he or she is ready.

Once shooters start moving, they should continue to move forward, firing two shots on each target as the move through the gauntlet of targets.

When completed, *holster up downrange*, turn and return to the firing line.

Skills & Considerations:

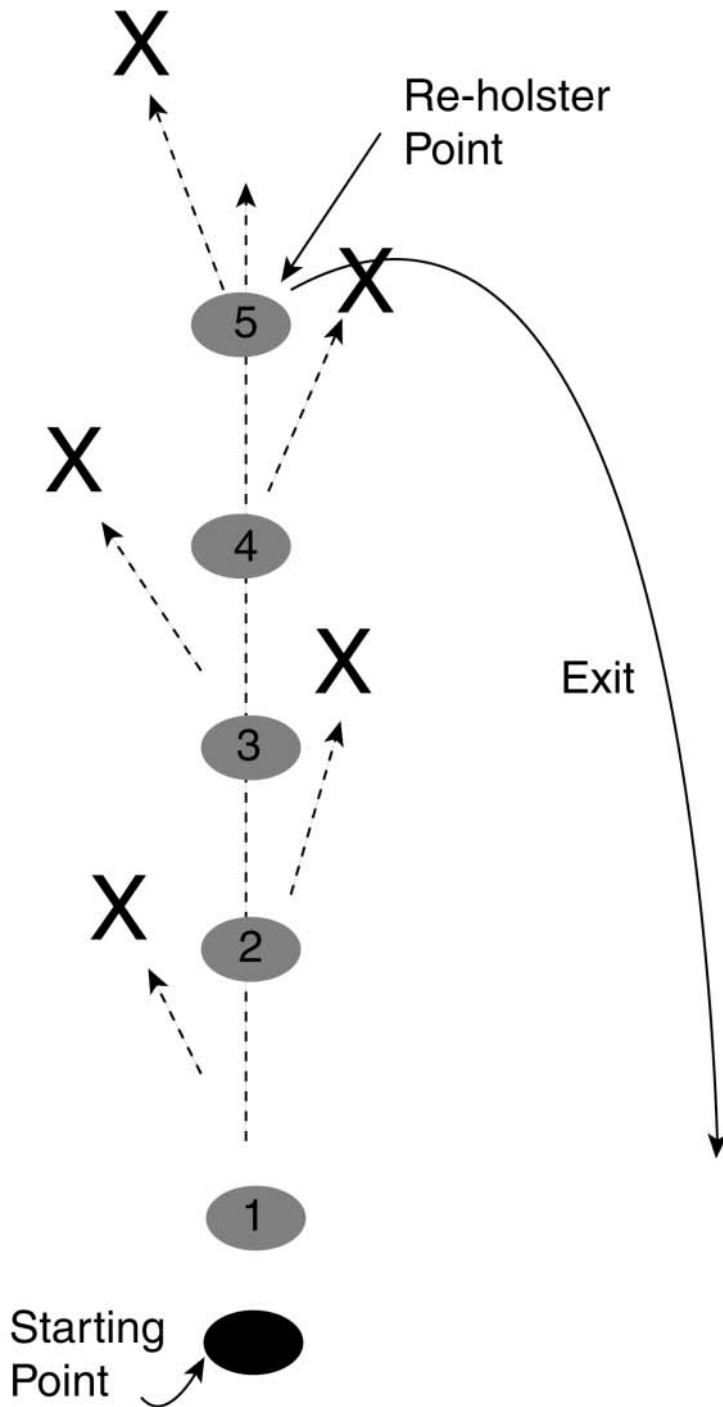
- The ability to maintain the shooting platform. Maintaining the proper movement and shooting pace.
- The ability to mentally “attack” targets when required. (i.e. Active Shooter scenarios)
- Helps develop situational awareness
(not getting too close to the targets before engaging)
- Reloading and clearing malfunctions (if required) on the move.

Safety Issues:

- Running is unacceptable.
- Getting too close to the targets is dangerous when shooting at steel targets.
- Turning and facing the firing line BEFORE holstering the weapon is potentially deadly situation. Initially have an instructor move all the way up and down the gauntlet with the student, before allowing them to move unaccompanied.
- Ensure all students are accounted for before allowing the next student to proceed forward to engage targets.

Shooting Platform

Solo - Forward



Shooting Platform – Target Engagement while Moving Forward – Pair

Oftentimes you need to move forward in a confrontation. During this movement you need to pay attention to the surroundings around you, as well as have the ability to accurately engage targets on the move at the closer ranges.

Additionally you need to be acutely aware of your partner. You need to know where he is in space, what the status of his weapon and anticipate future actions.

You need to be familiar with the psychological pressure of having a moving partner, the report of the weapons, muzzle flashes, flashlights, as well as the strike of the bullets

This drill is designed to bring these skills to the forefront.

The pair starts off the #1 target. The pair is given the command; “Your Hot” and they initiate movement based on a pre-established leadership structure. Somebody is leading; somebody is following. The pair leader says “On Me” or “On You”. When the designated partner moves, the pair moves forward together on the outside of the targets staying online.

Once shooters start moving, they should continue to move forward, firing two shots on each target as the move through the gauntlet of targets. When completed, the pair must *holster up downrange*, turn and return to the firing line.

Skills & Considerations:

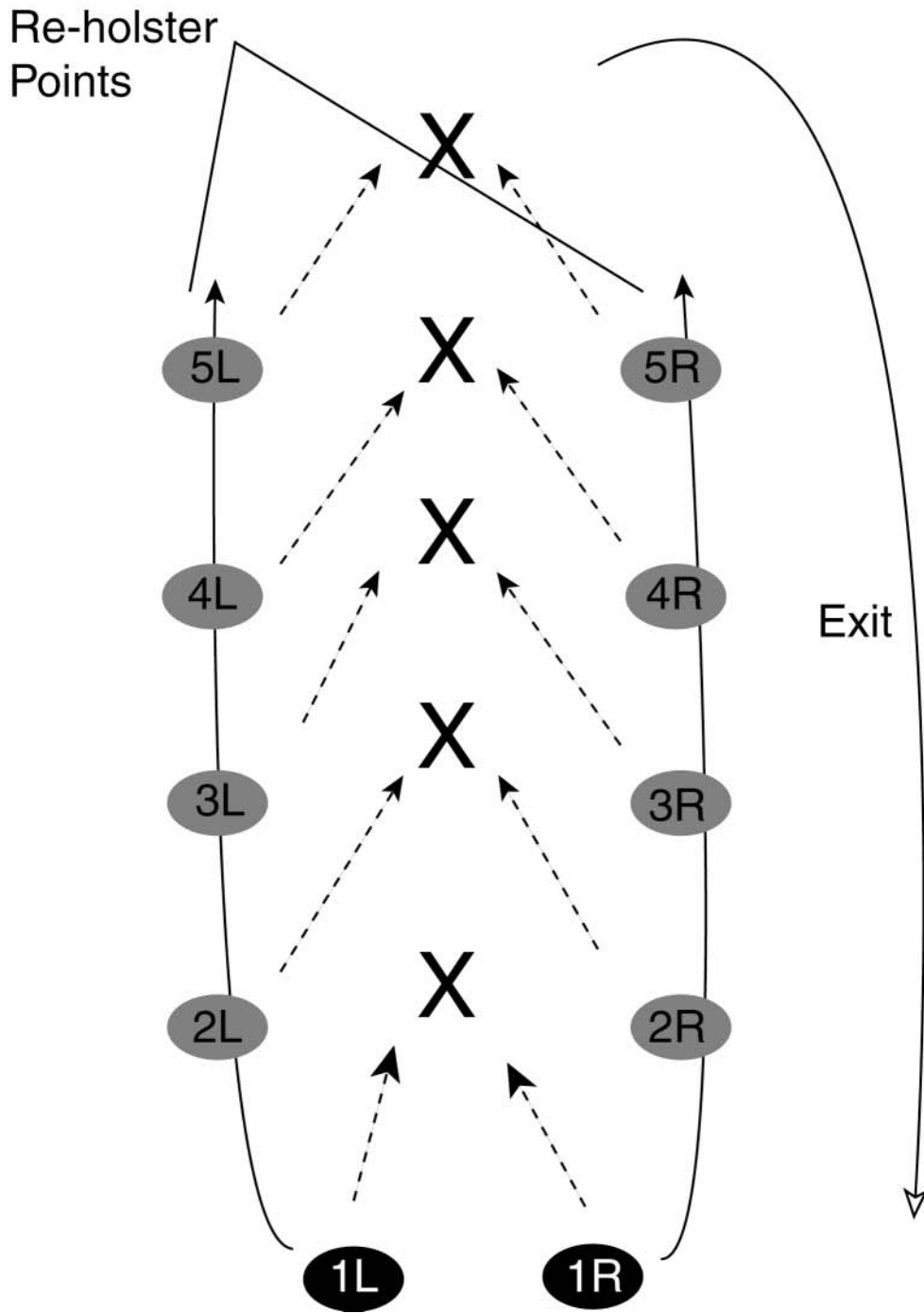
- When you are the left side, you should be using the left side of your body in terms of weapons mount. Opposite shoulder or hand when on the right side of the targets. One exception to this would occur when you employ the Neck-Index flashlight technique. In this case, Right side of the targets – Left hand is extended. Left side of the targets – Right hand is extended.
- The ability to maintain the shooting platform (proper movement and shooting pace).
- The ability to mentally “attack” targets when required. I.E. Active Shooter scenario.
- Helps develop situational awareness (Do not get too close to the targets)
- Reloading and clearing malfunctions (if required) on the move.
- Additional duress of having a partner is close proximity

Safety Issues:

- Running is unacceptable.
- Getting too close to the targets is dangerous when shooting at steel targets.
- Turning and facing the firing line BEFORE holstering the weapon is potentially deadly situation. Initially have an instructor move all the way up and down the gauntlet with the student, before allowing them to move unaccompanied.
- Ensure all students are accounted for before allowing the next student to proceed forward to engage targets.
- Additional hazard of having a partner in close proximity

Shooting Platform

Pair - Forward



Light Move – Shoot Move

This drill is designed to teach the student to start thinking displacement whenever an illumination tool is used against a threat.

The shooter starts squared up on the target. The command is given, "Right".

The shooter illuminates (identifies) his targets, moves to the right decides to engage the target or not (with or without another burst of light). If the target is engaged, move again to the right in order to minimize the threat's ability to track your location based on muzzle flash from your weapon.

Once the shooter has moved to the right for the second time, that shooter should transition his weapon to the opposite side and standby to move back to the left on the command "Left".

The drill is repeated over and over with a variety of weapons and flashlight techniques.

Skills & Considerations

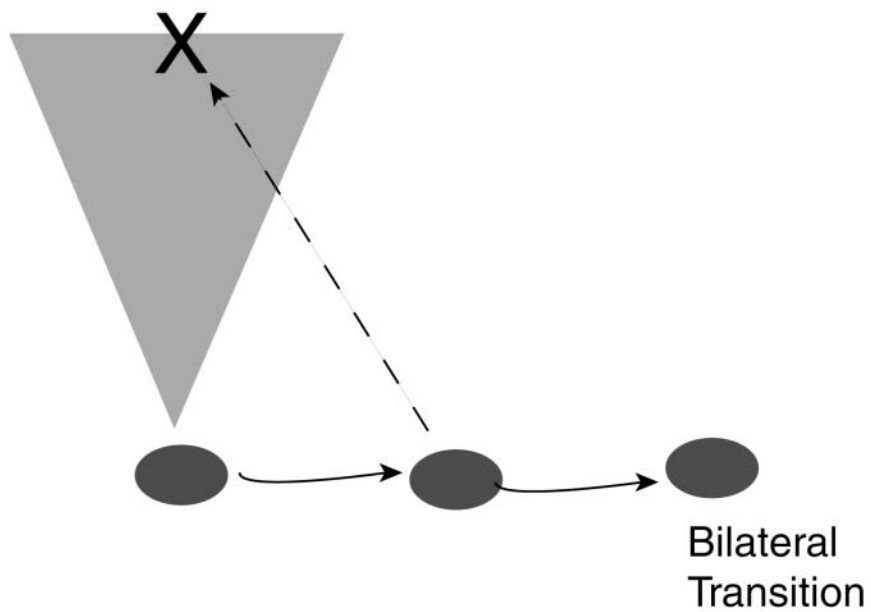
- Sliding
- Bilateral Shooting
- Proper use of the Lighting Principles, Techniques, and Tools

Safety Issues

- Students can move too quickly or too far or not at all. Ensure the targets are spaced far enough apart to prevent collisions.

Light Move - Shoot Move

Solo Drill



Solo Cornering

If you stop and think about it, proper, powerful cornering technique based on sound principles is one of the most useful tools in your bag. Corners are everywhere and you must be able negotiate them better than your adversary to consistently win.

This drill is design to let you work the basics of your cornering technique.

From position #1 and #2, spend some time learning just to break the visual plane with just your eye, your weapon, and a small part of your arm.

From here, practice changing your distance from the corner.

Change levels and fire. Go back and repeat several times.

Sometime in the practice, step away from the corner; prepare to slide across the opening using the shooting platform. Either simply identify the target as a no-shoot, or engage it as a hostile threat. Continue to slide all the way until your can see deep in to both the corners.

From here, practice transitioning to your opposite side at position #3. Reengage from a low level position at position #4.

Restart the random practice sequence from this side and do going the opposite direction.

Start in bright light conditions then later add a flashlight to the mix. Experiment with various techniques to see which one works where in the sequence. Then move to diminished lighting conditions and conduct more experimentation. Different techniques are more comfortable and easily adapted than others.

Occasionally we put cardboard on the inside edges of the mock doorway and practice seeing a threat, moving behind the concealment, but engage the target just inches inside the concealment utilizing the “picture” that clearly formed during the quick-peek.

Skills & Considerations:

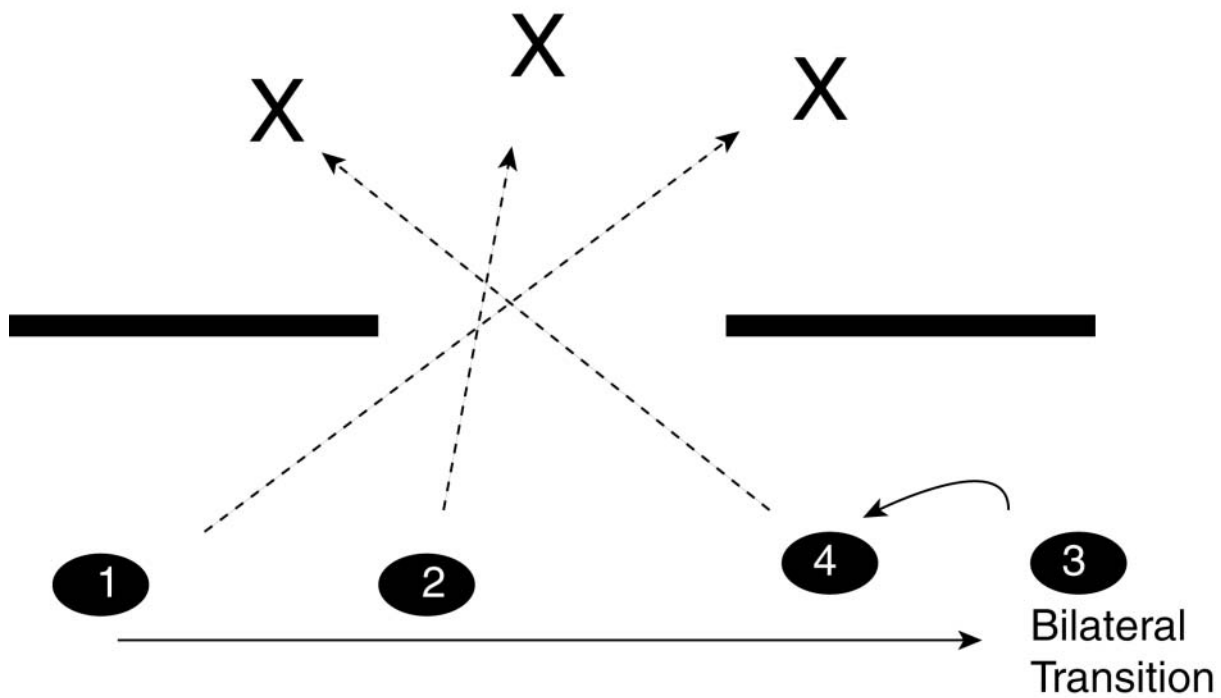
- This drill challenges your ability to vertical and horizontal displace efficiently.
- Learning to offer minimal exposure to your opponent, yet still presenting a powerful opposing pressure.
- Transitions & Bi-lateral shooting capability
- Immediate accurate shots on a target – looking to eliminate wasted time (Economy of motion)

Safety Issues:

- Muzzle direction has a tendency to drift parallel to the firing line. Be especially aware of this potential problem!
- A high potential for unsafe weapons handling during position changes and transitions.

Shooting Platform

Solo - Cornering Drill



Pair Cornering

Only after you have mastered all the other drills previously listed should one start pair cornering.

This type of drilling should only be done with extremely proficient and experienced shooters.

The drill starts with a high-low stack on one side of the doorway or the other. Both shooters can engage the exposed target with the pathway is clear to do so. Randomly slice the corner.

The lead and low shooter #1 should NEVER rise up without full and complete communication/understanding with the #2 shooter. It could result in immediate death of shooter #1 resulting from a close range shot to the back of the head.

Both shooters work to take control on the space. At some point, shooter #2 communicates that he is going to slide by the door. When he does, #1 should move to position 1B in the modified prone to support #2 as he engages the middle target. In reality, a threat in the middle of this room or down a hallway, might try to raise a weapon, which would obscure his vision to the new position of #1, leaving a clear path for engagement by #1.

#2 quickly passes just as would be done in a solo situation. #2 moves all the way to 2C and attempts to observe the corner now in view. Once that has been observed and all threats in that area accounted for, #2 should transition and begin to close the space down from the right side of the doorway. Start the pairs from both the left and right side of the doorway.

Once this movement has been mastered, then you can extend the drill to include an entry.

It goes in this sequence. Approach the door, setup a high/low stack, corner as a pair, outside partner slides-by, clears center and the newly appearing corner, transitions, communicate the entry (cross or button-hook), enter and engage the targets. See entry diagrams.

Skills & Considerations:

- This drill challenges your ability to vertical and horizontal displace efficiently as a pair.
- Transitions & Bi-lateral shooting capability.
- Immediate accurate shots on a target – looking to eliminate wasted time.
(Economy of motion)

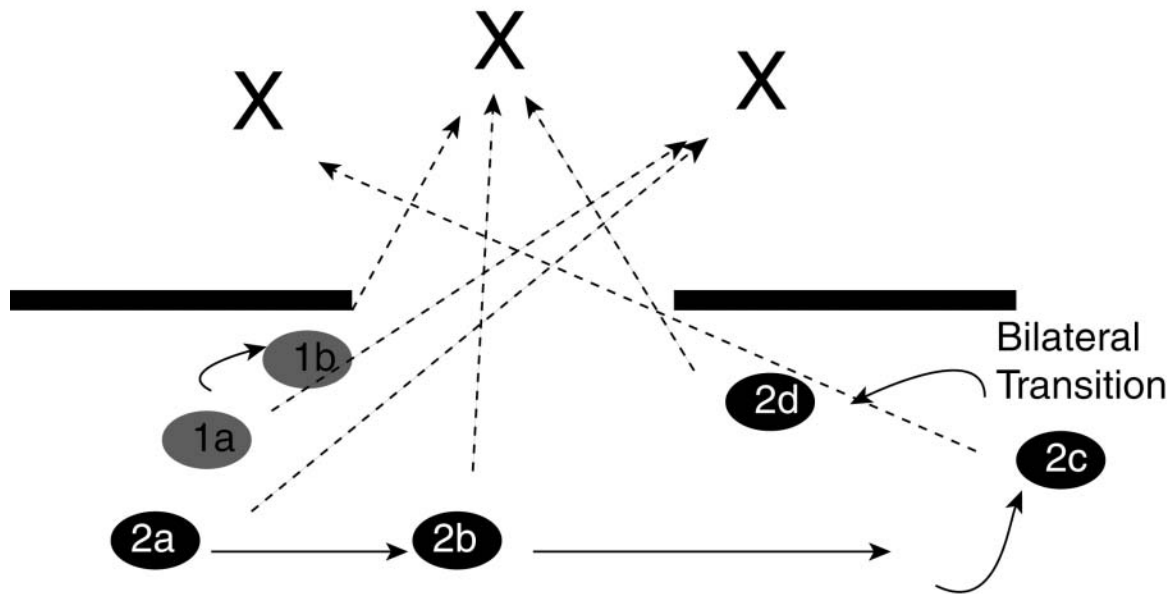
Safety Issues:

- Muzzle direction has a tendency to drift parallel to the firing line. Be especially aware of this potential problem.
- A high potential for sloppy weapons handling during position changes and transitions.
- Low shooter rising up or into the line of fire of #2.

Always demonstrate the drill several times. Allow the students to work the drill “Dry” several times. Allow time for questions. Then close monitor all movements of the students during 1/2-speed live-fire runs.

Shooting Platform

Pair - Cornering Drill



Crisscross Entry

Crisscross entries are a useful tool to get multiple individuals in to a new space, especially when the door opening is over 36" and under 72".

If the door is too narrow, you will essentially be running a stack in. If it is too wide, then you will be facing a greater exposure in the fatal funnel of fire.

Finishing cornering and setup individuals or elements on both sides of the door. Element leader calls out the entry, "Cross on Me" or "Cross on You".

As the first man begins to move, the second must mirror this movement as close as possible to ensure that he covers #1's back as soon as possible. Enter in an angle, staying off the walls to prevent deep corner threats from easily striking you. Once your initial corner is covered, then collapse and assist center.

Skills and Considerations:

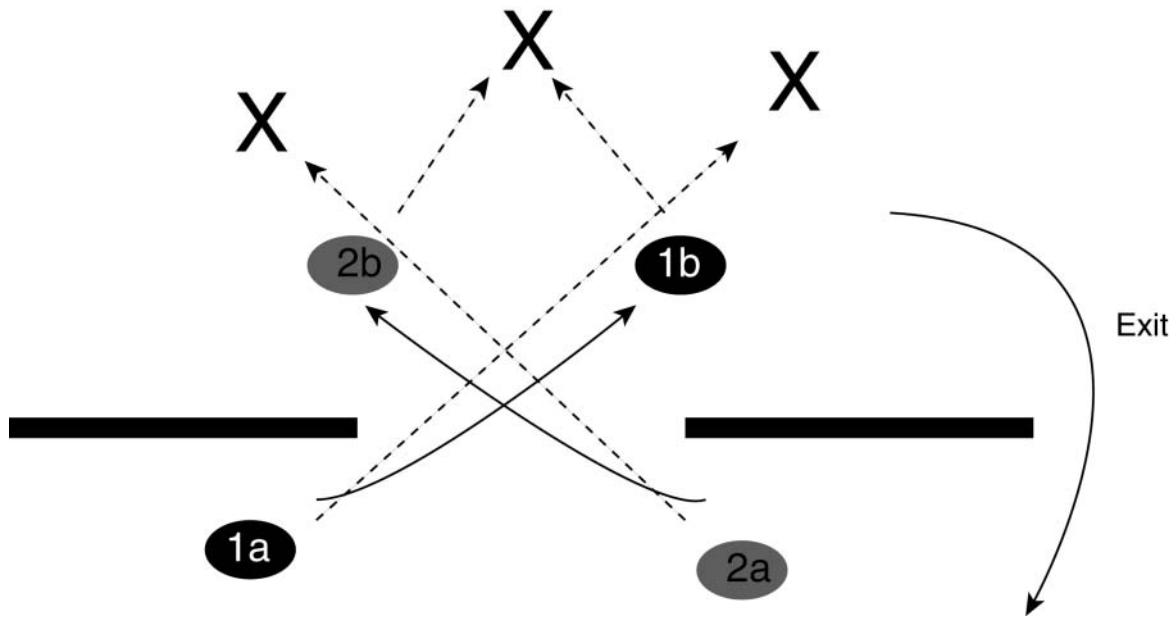
- Bi-Lateral shooting ensures the most effective use of your weapon and minimizes your exposure.
- Learning to "read" you partners movement so as to seamlessly roll into the room virtually simultaneously.
- Learning to start your entry, several feet away from the opening to create an easier read and to assure that you are at maximum velocity when in the funnel as opposed to the start of your acceleration cycle.

Safety Issues:

- Second man in the entry must ensure that the muzzle of his weapon is carefully controlled at ALL TIMES. #1 will be passing through the area that #2 was covering with his weapon. #2's weapon must drop immediately as #1 moves into the doorway.
- On entry, do not allow students to engage the targets too close if utilizing steel for targets.
- Do not allow shooters to turn back toward the firing line until their weapons are in a safe condition and holstered.
- Ensure all students are accounted for before allowing the next pair to work.
- Always demonstrate the drill several times. Allow the students to work the drill "Dry" several times. Allow time for questions. Then closely monitor all movements of the students during 1/2-speed live-fire runs.

Shooting Platform

Criss-Cross Entry Drill



Button-Hook Entry

Button-hook entries are a useful tool to get multiple individuals in to a new space, especially when the door opening over 72”.

Finish cornering and setup individuals/elements on both sides of the door. Element leader calls out the entry, “Button-hook on Me” or “Button-hook on You”.

As the first man begins to move, the second must mirror this movement as close as possible to ensure that both corners are covered immediately. Enter in an angle, staying off the walls to prevent deep corner threats from easily striking you. Once your initial corner is covered, then collapse and assist center.

Skills and Considerations:

- Bi-Lateral shooting ensures the most effective use of your weapon and minimizes your exposure.
- Learning to “read” you partners movement so as to seamless roll into the room virtually simultaneously.

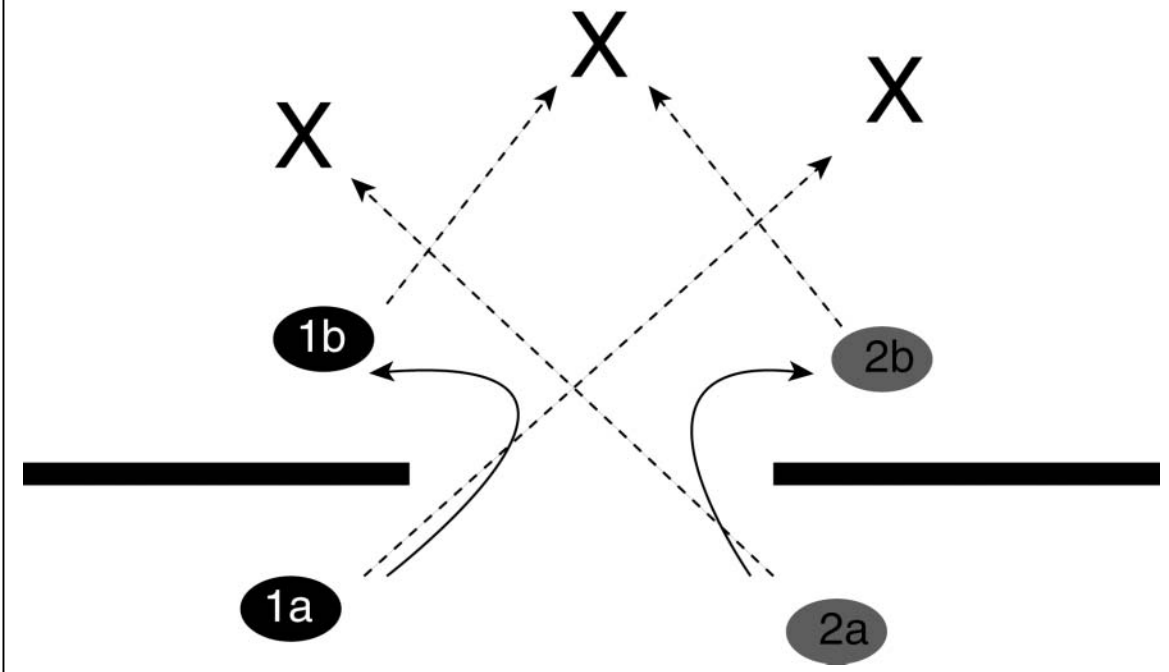
Safety Issues:

- On the button-hook, ensure that individuals are not pointing weapons at each other.
- On entry, do not allow students to engage the targets too close if utilizing steel targets.
- Do not allow shooters to turn back toward the firing line until their weapons are in a safe condition and holstered.
- Ensure all students are accounted for before allowing the next pair to work.

Always demonstrate the drill several times. Allow the students to work the drill “Dry” several times. Then close monitor all movements of the students during 1/2-speed live-fire runs.

Shooting Platform

Button Hook Entry Drill



Multiple Iterations – Doorways

Setup multiple doorways with 3 targets. The doorways can be setup inline, across the range, or staggered depending on the range configuration.

This creates a practical shooting drill that simulates a larger structure, tests pair or element movement, and requires a wide variety of skills to be accessed.

Safety Issues:

Ensure the backstop is appropriate.

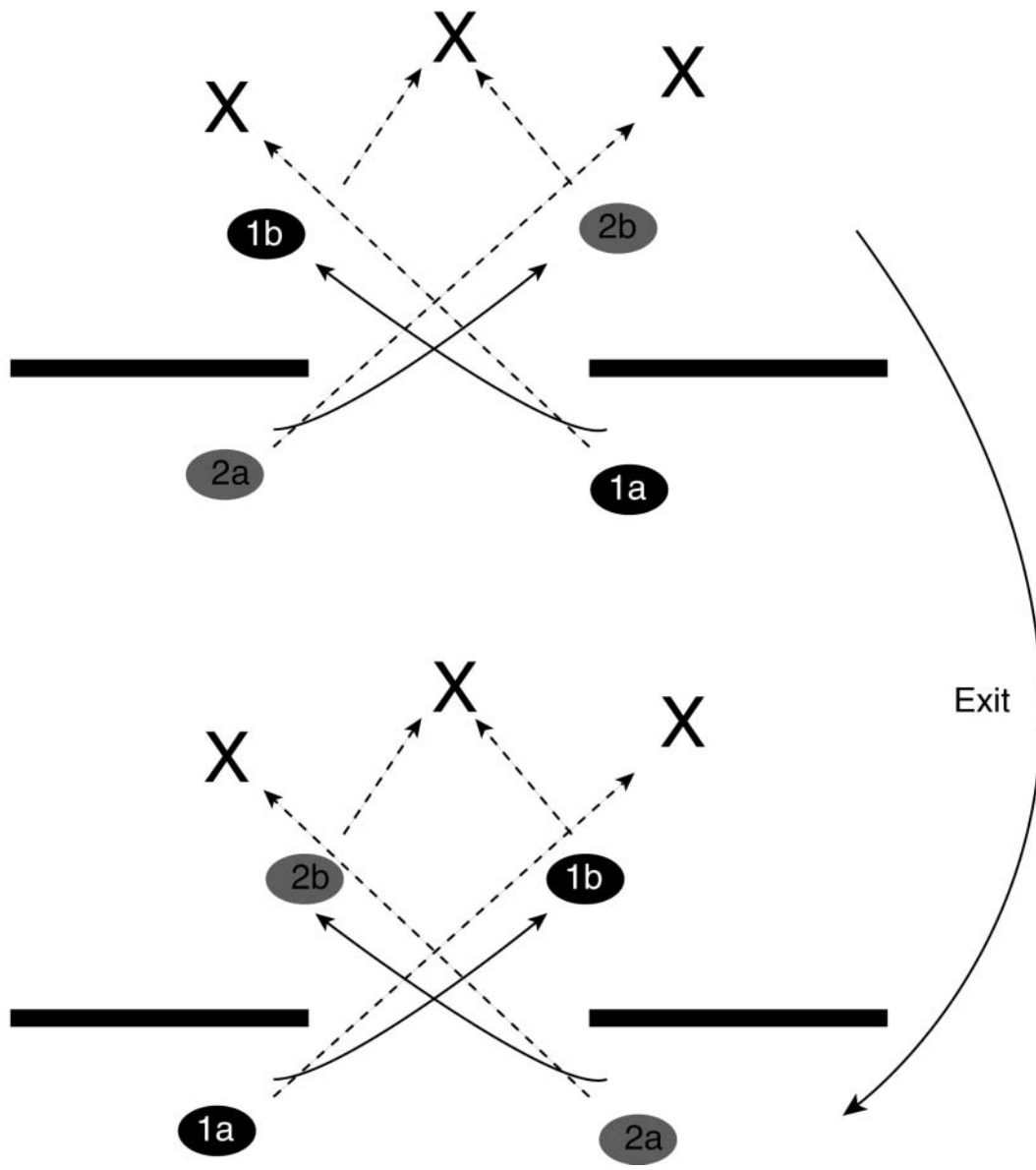
On entry, do not allow students to engage the targets too close if utilizing steel for targets.

Do not allow shooters to turn back toward the firing line until their weapons are in a safe condition and holstered.

Ensure all students are accounted for before allowing the next pair/team to work.

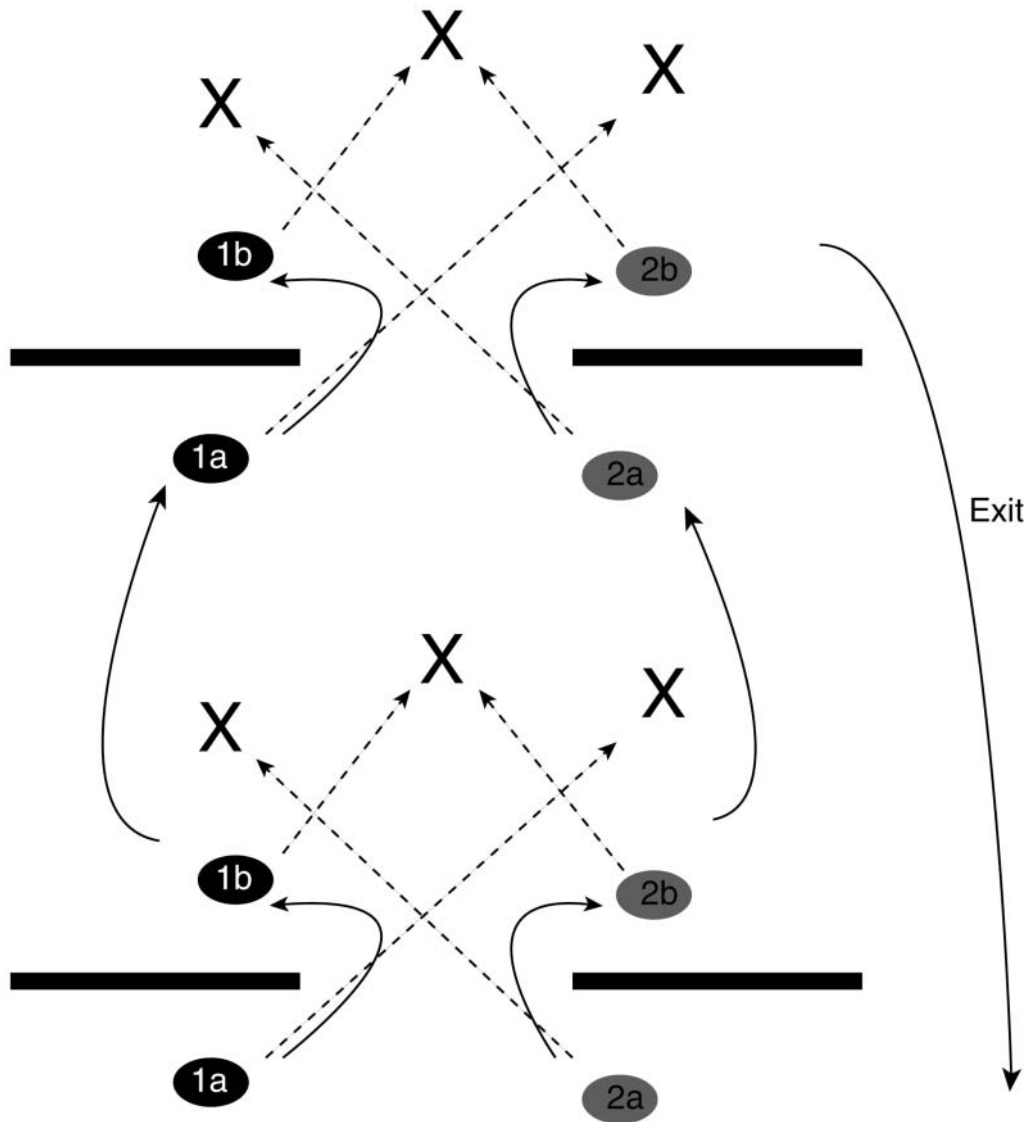
Always demonstrate the drill several times. Allow the students to work the drill “Dry” several times. Then close monitor all movements of the students during 1/2-speed live-fire runs.

Shooting Platform Criss-Cross Entry Drill (Adv)



Shooting Platform

Button Hook Entry Drill (Adv)





THE STRATEGIES OF LOW LIGHT ENGAGEMENTS INSTRUCTOR HANDBOOK

Section #4 – Tactical Applications – Partial List

Cornering

Other Considerations

Cornering

One of the most critical, but often overlooked, aspects of close quarter combat is the ability to negotiate corners while presenting a firearm. What are the proper cornering techniques? Is there a difference with a handgun or shoulder-fired weapon?

What are the principles that form the foundation for proper technique?

What is the mindset required to be successful?

Let's work our way into this.

The primary tool in your toolbox is your mindset. This is the cornerstone that must be laid carefully or the building will fall under the slightest duress. No matter how good your technique, no matter how deep your understanding of the theory, the rubber meets the road in the steadfastness of your mind.

Whenever I pick up a firearm in any operational capacity, I immediately go into what my friends call "shark mode." Shark mode is an excellent description of where you should be mentally. The shark is one of nature's fiercest and most efficient predators- you too must be The Pure Hunter to consistently defeat opponents. You must be willing to take the fight to the opponent if required.

You must have immediate, uninterrupted access to a mental switch that brings this mode forward. When in this mental space, you are not concerned about what is going to happen to you, you are forcing your opponents to be concerned about what is going to happen to them. The late Col. Rex Applegate entitled his groundbreaking 1943 book on close quarters combat, Kill Or Be Killed. He knew the essence of the correct mindset.

The second part of a proper mindset is to maintain a mental balance the entire time you are cornering. You should remain completely balanced in the sense that no matter what you see, you will only do what you must- no more, no less. You are attempting to maintain the center of the fight at all times.

Your weapon and your body are an extension of your mind- you take ground or give ground only because you want to. When the mind is rattled, the delivery system loses capability.

You must be dynamically and acutely aware of force vectors, horizontal, and vertical displacement options, your speed-on-ground, distance from objects and the material composition of the things that are between you and any potential adversary. Simply stated- attempt to be totally and absolutely situationally aware.

Competent cornering embodies the ability to mentally "see" what is on the other side before you get there. You quickly eliminate where your opponent cannot be to bring him into an area that you can control. You are unrelenting, but not overly aggressive.

You are mentally pushing your opponent into an ever-tighter death spiral from which there will be no recovery.

A friend's martial arts teacher told him, "Not faster than bullet, faster than mind." Perfect.

You are determined, but completely flexible- flexible in the sense that you have no pre-determined route, distance, rhythm or timing. You are always willing to do the unconventional. A set, easily predictable routine on the corner will be your personal fast track to the morgue.

Mentally, you must begin to see your entire environment as nothing but a chained series of short, medium and long-range corners. These corners appear in the horizontal and vertical planes. A stairway is a vertical corner. The front, back, top and bottom of your vehicle are all corners.

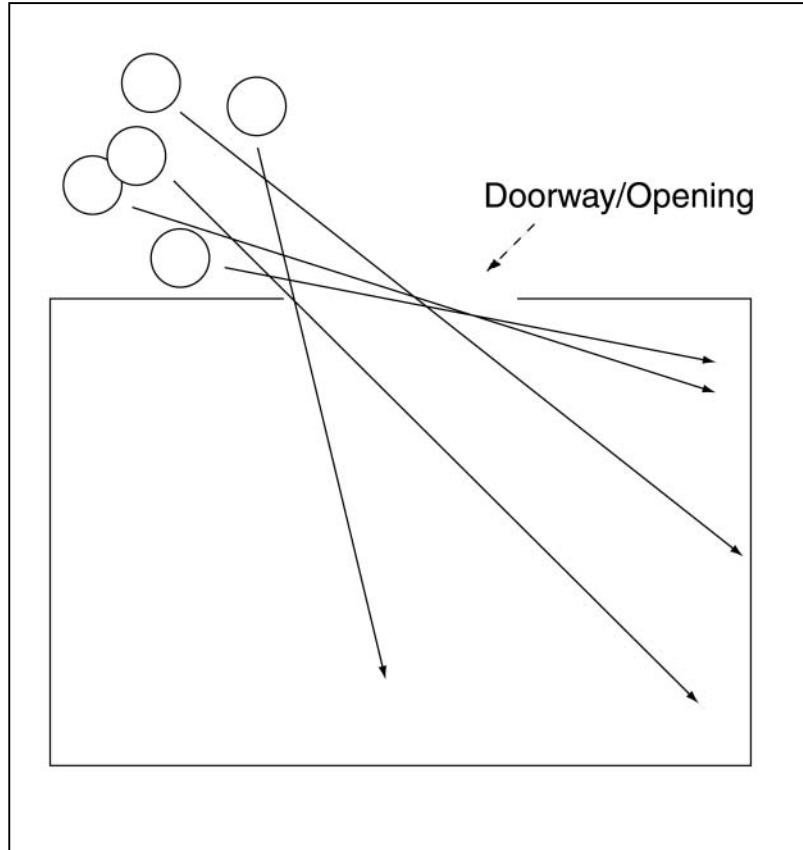
A common mental mistake is not addressing corners soon enough. Operators have a tendency to mentally sag until they are at the threshold of the corner. If a threat appears during this transitory approach phase, they are caught flat-footed.

I practice cornering every day of my life. As I move through my environment, I play a game. As I turn corners, move down hallways, ascend or descend stairways, I attempt to see anybody in the environment- before they see me. If I don't, I "lost" that "battle." After 20 years of playing my little game, I generally win.

**Number One: Begin
Cornering as Soon as
Practical**

What I mean by this, as soon as perceive a direction change or additional angles forming out in of you must begin addressing from furthest point away from that perceived area as soon as possible.

One of the most common and natural mistakes is addressing corner too late. It is a timing and sequence issue that I have seen incorrectly thousands of times. individual or team element essentially saunters up to the and then attempts to close down angles. Oftentimes this is much late. Once "on top" of the corner are in "too deep" to quickly respond to dynamic threats. You feel cramped and boxed in at this You need to visually address as of the new area as possible from furthest distance away possible.



you
front
them
newly

the
done
An
corner
the
too
you

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point.
much
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When dealing with any new found corner, don't be afraid to move forward and back, up and down, left and right frequently to see from a wide variety of angles, at distance. The more you see BEFORE you get there, the less unknown space you will have to deal with when you do close the gap. Time spent at distance is well invested. Threats often reveal themselves early because they can sense something is coming and feel obligated to do something about it. When you are at distance you have more choices, when you get close it becomes now or never. Think about it, the reason you have a firearm in the first place is so that it can reach out and touch if necessary. Don't neglect the crucial time during the transition from point A to the corner. Work diligently to address these longer angles.

To illustrate, picture an Indy car racing into a corner at over 250 mph. If the driver addresses the situation too late he is ejected out the back of the corner often with catastrophic results. Why? Because the line chosen, the velocity selected, impacts the balance of the vehicle, which in term dictates the inevitable outcome. A professional driver is dealing with that corner from a great distance. Moment by moment he is teetering between greatness and disaster.

Number Two: Understand Proper Distancing

Maintain plenty of distance from the corner whenever possible. I try to stay at least an arms length away from corners whenever possible. You will be surprised how much space you really have if you don't collapse in all the time. This type of relationship manifests itself inside a house, around a vehicle, essentially anything that is between you and your opponent(s).

I often hear folks dragging body parts and equipment along the wrong side of the wall as they tentatively shuffle step toward a corner. I call this "walking on a mine field". It is an outward physical manifestation of their insecurity. Somehow they believe if they hug their walls and corners, nobody is going to see them or hurt them. It turns out the opposite is true. In this position you are fighting from some of worst angles for countering a threat.

We joke about the magnetic or gravitational effect of all objects during the duress of a projectile-based fight. Somebody out there has his or her hand on the all-powerful switch that energizes all these objects during a gunfight. We are desperately looking for this virtual switching complex, but as of yet cannot determine its location. As soon as bullets are flying, all combatants that do not have a deep-seated understanding of the negative power of this effect are pulled in and immobilized on the object or wall that is located directly in front of them.

When you have smashed yourself into a corner, wall or object, it becomes exceedingly difficult to deal with any weapons malfunctions, transitions and reloads. What you need to understand is, that once you have been pulled into this proverbial black hole, it is extremely difficult to get back out.

Once here, you can no longer see or properly respond to the ever-changing dynamic located around you. Don't forget the John Boyd's OODA cycle, you must observe and orient to move fluidly during the sequences found in conflict. You are bio-mechanically inhibited and you did it to yourself.

When you are too close, you have also allowed your opponent to move within the forward battle space unseen and undeterred. You simply cannot engage him effectively.

You have also eliminated many of your all-important options at this point including horizontal displacement: Once parallel parked on the wall, you have eliminated movement in that direction as a potential temporary escape path.

If a threat suddenly appears as they often do, you are left with staying put, or further exposing yourself by drifting further away from the wall. This is not the time to give your opponent a large surface area to shoot at! By maintaining proper positioning away from your corners, you will keep windows of time and space open to travel in. You don't have much of either, so don't just hand it to your opponent without a fight.

Once you are committed to a specific corner it is time to continue "the dance" of closing down the space. Remember this area is not just a 2-dimensional space in terms of X & Y (breadth and width); it has a vertical component Z (height). Your movements should reflect this reality.

Cornering with a firearm implies a human threat(s). These human beings are attempting to "read" your movements. It makes sense to randomly vary your approach, since a predictable routine is easily countered. Learn to vertically displace your body at will without conscious thought. Ease and biomechanical fluidity is the goal.

Proper vertical displacement takes some dedication to training. You must have flexibility to incorporate the vertical displacement tool into your tool bag. I have seen men and women well into their sixties function with incredible efficiency because they made the mental commitment to do so. If you are deficient in this area, you simply do not have the maximum arsenal to bear in terms of the human operating system. No piece of hardware will close the gap.

Start in a stance that addresses the corner, the tips of your toes just back of the imaginary line that travels along the floor to the edge of the corner. The only thing that should be visible to any potential adversary is a small portion of your outboard arm, your outboard eye and the weapon hinged just slightly below the sight plane. You

are anticipating contact, but you need to see, so do not cover critical areas of the forward space with your arms and weapon until you have to initiate.

Displace vertically by replacing your outboard foot with the outboard knee, letting gravity naturally pull you down.

This is not as easy as it sounds. Most people use some type of pushing, internal pulling, or contracting to go down. Your back should be straight, head up; the top of your outboard foot should be contacting the ground. This foot position offers excellent stability and prevents a partner from breaking your ankle.



To move to what I term low kneeling, allow gravity to do its magic again. In one seamless movement slide the outboard foot underneath your hip girdle while simultaneously sliding the lead foot as far forward as possible. Drop your upper body into the space created between your feet. You will find that you can float the weapon just millimeters over the ground.

To get back up, to kneeling reverse the previous sequence. To re-establish a standing position, an additional concept needs to be brought forth. Instead of pushing off the back foot, slide your hips forward and draw yourself up with the lead leg. You do not lift your upper body by pulling with your back muscles; you align your hips underneath and rise. **There is no weight/pressure placed on the back foot!** This is a critical differentiator from your instinctual mechanic. I teach this movement by having students imagine that a set of strings from the ceiling are pulling them straight up from the top of their shoulders and forehead. It takes practice to master; don't give up easily. This methodology will ultimately keep you amazingly balanced once inculcated. It is much more efficient in terms of time and effort. You will have much more control of your body and weapon during more of the total time you are in the environment. If you wear body armor, helmet and other kit, it really pays dividends.

All throughout the position changes, you must not break the imaginary glass plane that forms from ground to sky, the corner to your anchor points with any lower body parts. This plane should always be shattered with the weapon and eye first by articulating at the waist. Once the new space is appreciated, the lower body follows to re-establish total body balance. You have gained new territory.

I personally stay away from classic prone (a viable position) as much as possible. Although I can get there fast, it glues me to the ground too long if I need to vacate space. I can get absolutely next to the ground with this low-kneeling position and maintain maneuverability in the space.

Where this movement fits in tactically is your decision. The application of this technique is diverse once you are aware of it's potential. Here's a hypothetical example of how to employ vertical displacement.

Picture yourself attempting to see around a corner. As you maneuver around the corner you make contact with a potential threat. Rather than violently retreating backward in an off-balanced manner, instead you smoothly move in the horizontal direction slightly away from the opponent's vision. He falsely concludes that he can track you through the wall and begins to engage.

What he does not know is that you have also learned to drop immediately to the floor into the low-kneeling, bypassing kneeling altogether. You have mastered the technique so that gravity has done all the work and it happens as fast as a rock drops from your hand.



Your opponent has brought whatever weapon to bear and is firing. The weak link in his armor is in the fact that his lower field of view is now obscured. His own arms and weapon, the muzzle flash and recoiling weapon are limiting his view of your actual location.

Since you have learned to only break the plane with your eye and weapon, you now have unobstructed access to

the opponent from the floor, up through his arms, into his legs, hips, chest and head. As so goes the saying, "Better you than me!"

The final components I am going to deal with is actually breaking the threshold of the corner and entering to finish to dominant the new space.

Everything you have done prior to this moment; observation, anticipation, analyzing space, a varied and random distance routine can be considered jabbing. Jabs in boxing setup the right hand for the knockout. With a jab you are setting the tone for your most powerful strike. You don't want to over commit or take it up the teeth from the git go in the ring as you may find yourself flat on your back! You are light on your feet and ready to hit and move, and move again. You would be wise to give your opponent the maximum amount of respect.

When I conduct training, I always ask my students, how good is that opponent who is somewhere downrange? Correct answer: He is as good or better than you are! The classic military blunder is to underestimate your adversary. You must understand that he could put you down in a heartbeat if you create a gap for him to exploit.

In this business we see so much chest pounding, huffing and puffing about this or that concerning gun fighting. When I see or hear that, I understand that those engaging in such talk have number one never been in a gunfight or number two; don't understand the true dynamics of a gunfight.

Now that we respect our adversary, let's attempt to finish him.

There is an extremely strong and dangerous tendency to maintain or prolong what I call a 50/50 gunfight once you are engaged. This is a dangerous practice to say the least. The only way I have ever seen to eliminate this

tendency is to get involved with a training program that has good force-on-force simulation in it's advanced courses. Stepping back for a moment, when you turn the corner, what do you see? You may now see an armed threat attempting to corner from the opposite direction.

What are you actually seeing? You see a man with a gun, trying to do exactly what you are doing.. How good is he? We've already answered that question. You are engaging your mirror image Ask yourself another simple question. Would you bet your life on a flip of a coin?

What are the possibilities here?

1. I fire and neutralize the threat; I own him and the space
2. I fire and force my threat to move and retreat, I own the new space
3. We both fire and we both neutralize each other, neither combatants are a factor
4. We both fire and we both move and retreat, neither combatants own the space
5. He fires and neutralizes me, he owns me and the space
6. He fires and forces me to move and retreat, he owns the new space

Note, that only 2 of the possibilities are optimal for you, the rest are deadly or not optimal.

Yet, the fact remains; there are times you must corner. Armed professionals face this dilemma every day of the week!

This brings us back to the importance of training and developing a lookdown shoot-down capability. This is the moment in time where all your internal commitments and drivers, prior training, technical proficiency and tactical positioning all meet to decide the outcome. Fire your rounds and vacate the space. I typically fire a triple volley and leave.

Whether the threat immediately goes down or not, re-observe from a different angle and distance. If you missed your opportunity, do not stay in the set up camp and slug it out.

You will want to if you still see him and your mind will be screaming just a little more time, just a few more rounds. It needs to be right here, right now, shots on target and change your location. Bullets do not care if you can bench-press 350 lbs or are as fierce as a lion. Most likely the material that is between you and your threat does not do a good job of stopping bullets. The fact is most rounds fired in a gunfight do not hit the target. The fact is most people who are shot are not killed with the first round. Do not admire your handwork! Look for his friend.

We have a saying, unless the head is separated from the body by more that four feet, that person is still a potential threat.

If a gunfight does erupt on the corner, you must be committed to win, but savvy enough to have some patience to win. It is the JuiJitsu of gun fighting. Let your opponent over commit. Let him take the same line too many times. Let him be overly aggressive and too fast in action.

But, when the time is right and the window of opportunity opens, you must be there with all your mental tools and the correct physical movements to overwhelm the opponent. Once you have the opponent against the ropes, you must maintain constant, unrelenting pressure until that opponent is fully defeated.

Manipulating all available elements in proper combination and sequence allows an operator to consistently defeat opponents when the requirement for cornering arises.

Quick Peeks on tight corners or "T" intersections

1. Start either High or Low with a mind-set of getting in, snapping a photo and getting out. You are also thinking to hit any potential threats directly in the face/pupils with the hot spot of your flashlight beam. Remember what it feels like when someone uses flash photography. For a few moments, your vision is seriously degraded. This essentially means, loss of situational awareness. (See from the Opposite Perspective)

1a. Break the plane with an eye, weapon, and light (Align Three Things).

Some common mistakes here:

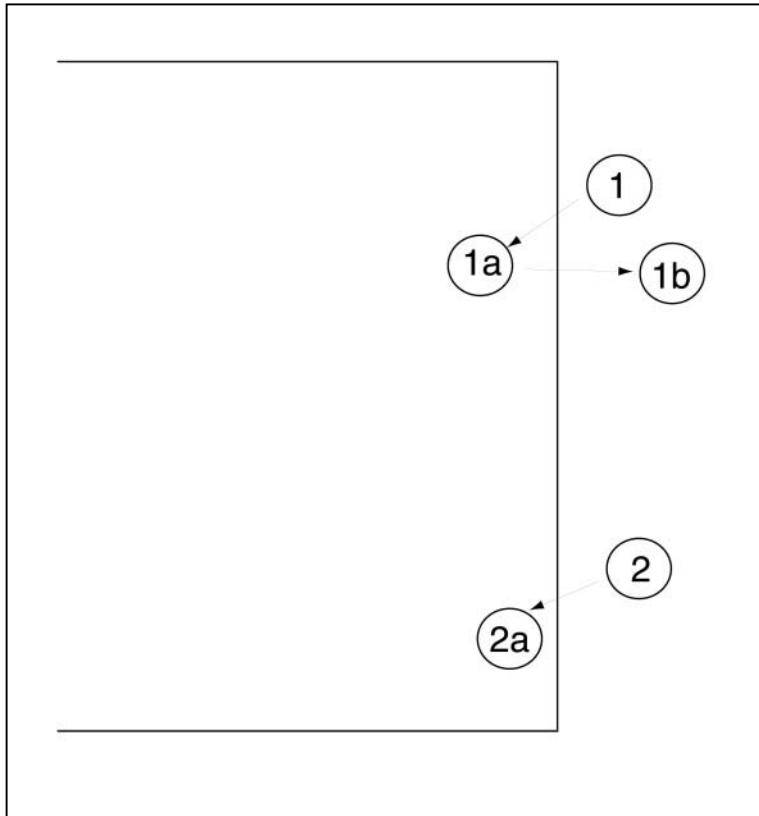
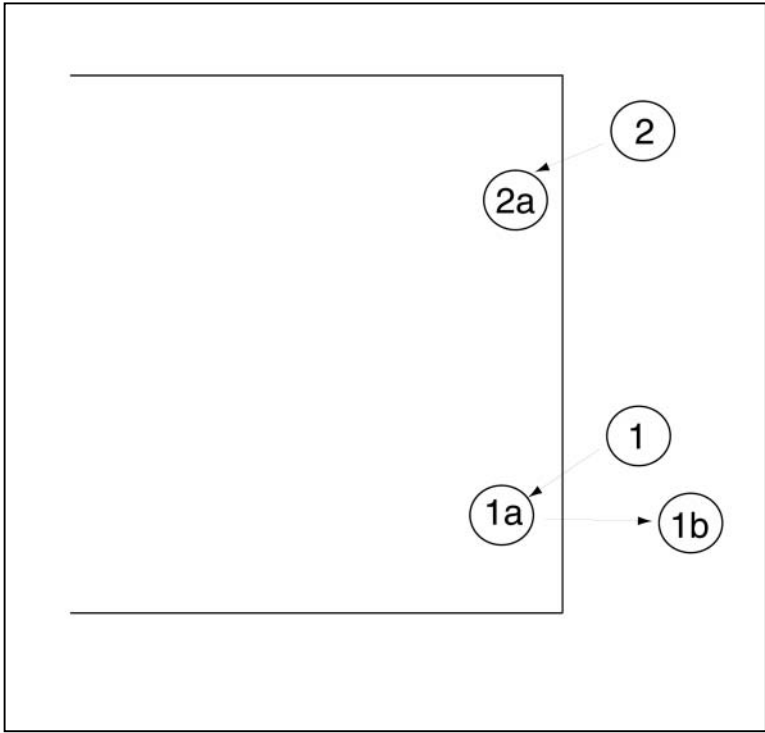
- Turning your illumination tool on too early
- Illuminating the wall directly in front of you (Self-Blinding)
- Dragging the beam on the ground first
- Slowly leading with your flashlight.

These actions give your exact location away to the threat prior to attempting the quick peek. Enter deep enough to make the effort worthwhile. Get in and get out. (Hunter vs. Victim)

2. Immediately change levels and break the plane again if the corner has gone unchallenged. If this was a "T" intersection, peek one way low, move back, peek the other way high. Of course it can be done in reverse, high then low. (Flexible, Fluid, Flowing and Unpredictable)

I prefer to show high, then let gravity naturally carry me down to the ground whenever possible. If the threat appeared chest high during the initial peek and bring a weapon to bear, I know he will most likely be trying to hold that chest-high force vector. He was hit in the face with a bright light and will attempt to bracket that area if he is committed to my harm. I have left that space and occupied a space he cannot see as his arms, weapon, and muzzle flash are concealing my actual position low and on the floor. If I choose to engage from there, I fire and move again to vacate the space.

In most law-enforcement situations, once an armed threat has been located in a deep corner, vacate the immediate space, contain and turn it into a barricaded suspect situation. I will follow that comment up with, in today's Active-shooter environment/situations; this may no longer be always the case.



An Excellent Tool is the "Slide-by"

Once you have determined or seen all that you can/want to see from any given corner, sometimes it is most beneficial to quickly and efficiently move across an opening.

During this transition, you can choose one of 2 options:

- Directly see into the space or down the hallway as you pass
- Simply to move past the space unnoticed utilizing the concealment offered by the darkness.

A successfully slide-by is predicated on the proper understanding of and technical proficiency in cornering. Additionally you must have technical skills to tread the floor properly in a "shooting platform". A smooth operating shooting platform is balanced, fluid and is significantly enhanced by the ability to shoot bilaterally without conscious thought. (Align Three Things)

1. Finishing cornering from this position

2. Now smoothly and quietly move away from your corner and the opening. This positioning allows you to accelerate PRIOR to presenting yourself in the un-cleared opening.

2a. At this position in space, you should be at maximum velocity, presenting the weapon and illumination tool into the un-cleared space. At this time you can emit with light, attempting to "Power with Light" at eye/chest level to temporary disrupt and disorient the vision of any standing threat. The hot spot should be rapidly moving to cover the maximum surface area downrange. You would be surprised how much you can see. Take the "photograph" in your mind, let it process and develop while still moving. You can also elect to simply move across the space in the dark.

3. Move ALL THE WAY to position #3. Why? Anyone that sees the slide-by may attempt to track you through the wall. Remember, most materials in most structures do not offer cover, only concealment. An unwanted deceleration in the opening occurs if you try to stop too early. Once in position #3, you can start cornering from the opposite side of the opening.

An extremely powerful variation of this theme when in a partner or team situation:

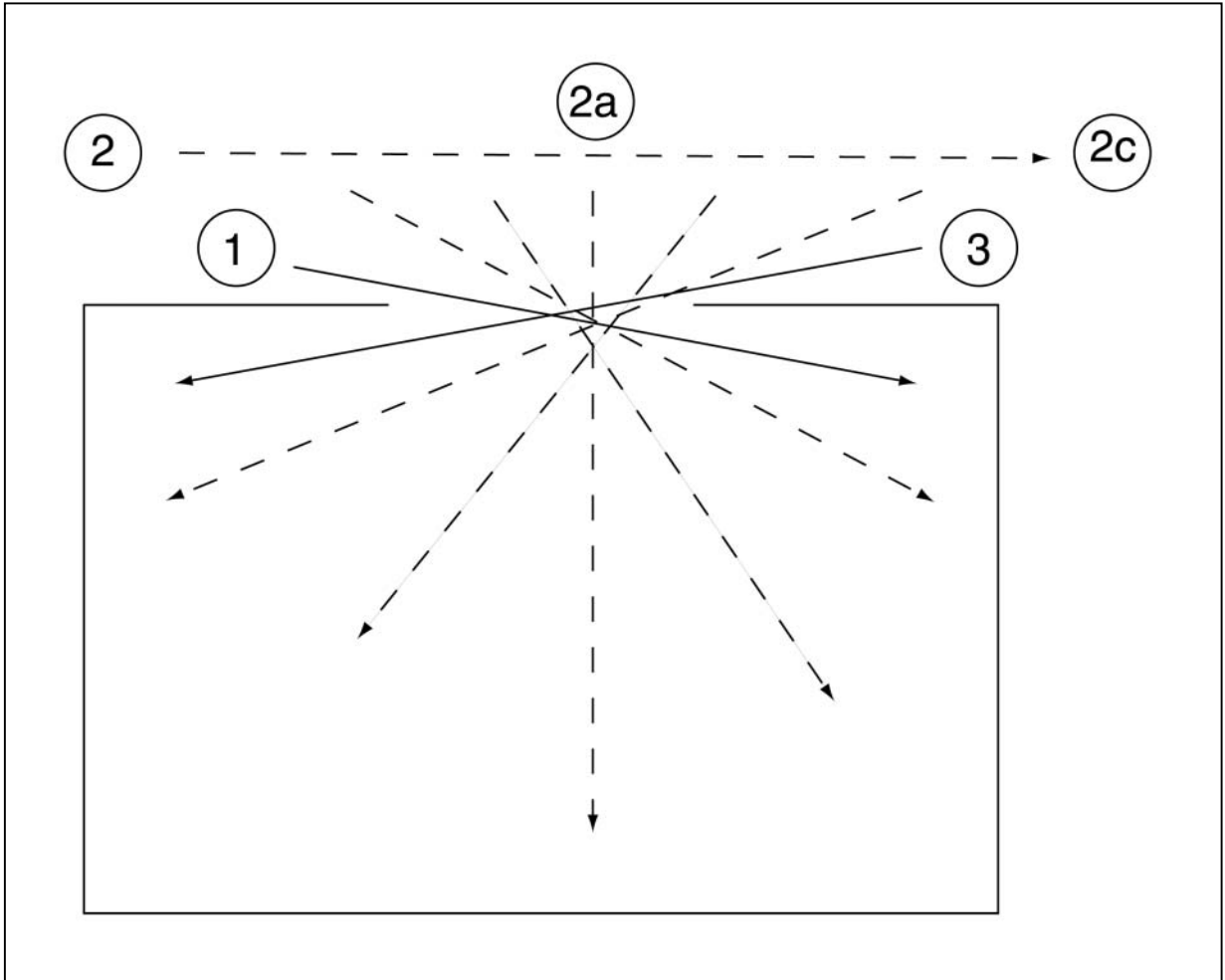
Number one moves across - Illuminates the space - Continues to cross the opening and moves down the hallway as a solo. If a threat is identified, number one either verbally communicates this or says nothing because the threat in the space is tracking #1 with gunfire. If the threat is firing, element #2 IMMEDIATELY slides to the initial corner in a modified-prone or kneeling to take-on the now firing threat who is typically facing way from this corner and has a weapon and arms up angling for #1. #2 should have a clear pathway to the threat to neutralize if required.

(Hunter vs. Victim)

If Number two is engaged by the threat, back away, call out "he's on me" and number one should now appear and engage from the opposite corner, again from the modified-prone as the last thing any threat saw from that side was a moving, chest-high target.

(Flexible, Fluid, Flowing and Unpredictable)

You can use slide-bys to get two High/Low stacks creating powerful cross-angles on any given doorway. Now you have 4 weapons, 4 lights and 4 sets of eyes.



"No-Light Entries"

This is not a basic entry technique, but nevertheless it is worth bringing to your attention.

So-called "No-Light" entries were discovered after years of force-on-force training in diminished light environments. Oftentimes through the proper use of corning, quick-peeking, and slide-bys a clear picture of the affected space can be obtained. Additionally you can often deceive and disorient your opponent through rigorous and random "strobing" patterns that flash throughout the darkened space he is occupying. The suspect may even catch one of the flashes in his eyes and retreat to a deeper section of the space. He may attempt to barricade himself behind an obstacle, thereby further shutting off his ability to see what is actually happening. Remember we are trying to get inside of the opponent's OODA loop and this may present a perfect opportunity to do so. He can no longer see, you know what the room layout is and where the suspect is now located.

The first diagram illustrates a possible way to setup the entry. It can be done as a solo if absolutely necessary, but a pair is certainly better.

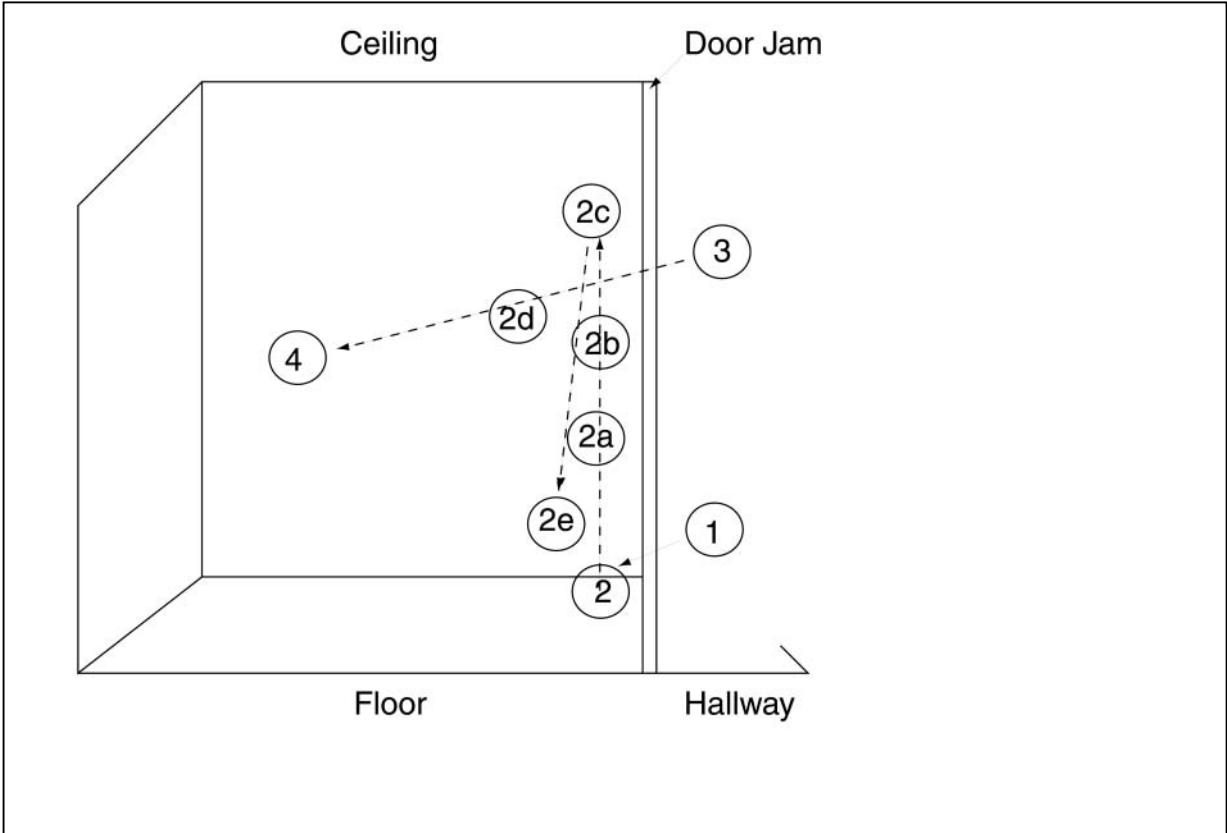
1. Start with your handheld flashlight, low on the outside of the space. This is one of the few times I would recommend using the handheld light without an eye and weapon attached. The missing weapon and eye are located with your partner on the other side of the corner.

2. Break the plane and rapidly "paint" the entire deep corner, up and down, slightly in and out to illicit a response from any possible threats in that corner.
(Reducing telegraphing by vertical and horizontal movements of the light)

Behind this light, you should have another officer observing from another angle, weapon and light off poised for action. (Power with Light)

3. Once you have painted, gotten a clear picture as a pair, its time to make entry. One of the two officers communicates "On Me, cross" or "On Me, buttonhook". On me should signify to the second officer that as soon as the first officer is moving, he should be folding into the room immediately after. The second officer can "know" when this is going to occur by listening and in many cases just reaching out and touching the first officer to feel for movement. As the second officer, feel which way the first goes. Maybe you thought he was going to cross in front but in fact, buttonhooks away. Adjust accordingly.

4. You are in under the concealment of darkness. (Light and Move)



"No-Light Entries - Continued"

1. - 2. As a pair, sometime prior to actually entering the space while it is dark, both officers should have "painted" a clear path on the floor to ensure good footing. You should practice this skill until you can quickly flash a space, enter it and touch something in particular while still dark merely by "reading" the "map/photo" you created at the corner.

1a. - 2a. Enter the space, lights out. Move only the previously painted path, only as deep as you know is safe. Note the pair is not running the walls. Stay away from the walls as suspects clearly tend to try and hug walls and direct bullets toward the door along the walls. Running the walls places both officers in harms way from either deep corner.

1b. - 2b. The lead officer on entry, should illuminate first. Oftentimes this is enough light to see the entire space. Lights and weapons should be directed in the remaining unseen spaces, in this case the two deep corners. You will find more often than not, if you have an armed suspect, he will be pointing a weapon at the door, where he believes you still are. (Light and Move) If you need to engage, engage and move again. If I see a weapon here, vertical displacements work extremely well.

1c. - 2c. If your space is clear move, rotate to re-clear space and/or assist your partner who may be engaged.

