

Modifying Your Pistol's Grip

One thing that we can probably say for sure is that there are two kinds of pistol shooters: Those that are working on their grips and those that are going to be working on their grips. This is because while there are a zillion different hands out there to hold pistols, the manufacturers decided that maybe four or six or eight different sizes/types of grip were enough to make and stock for each pistol. So, as everyone wants to have THE perfect fit, we are left with no choice but to start modifying. But what and how? We'll try to set out some of the basics in text as fancy diagrams will have to wait for the book.

The objectives: The pistol grip should be made so that your grip is reproducible. Pistol target shooting is just an exercise in repeating the same thing without deviation up to sixty or ninety times, so if the shooter grips the gun in always the same way, as Forrest Gump would say, "That's one more thing not to worry about." Next, the grip should allow the sights to be aligned without having to angle the hand at the wrist. In events like Rapid Fire and Free Pistol, it is critical that when the arm is brought up and the gun allowed to settle with the eyes closed, when the eyes are opened the sights are seen to be aligned. Then the grip should help support the gun and give a "secure" feeling without you having to exert a lot of force on it. Finally, we can throw in at least a degree of comfort as a requirement (certainly no pain!) The major mistake most novice grip changers make is to ADD too much "stuff". Very seldom does material need to be added to a modern generation target pistol grip! Quite to the contrary, most are too big in one or more places for the average hand. Hold your relaxed hand out in front of you and look at how the fingers curl and how a wedge shape is defined as you go from the second finger down to the little finger. A grip should taper in the same manner. Almost always the first removals should be where the web of the hand (between the thumb and forefinger) goes around the grip so the hand is not stretched out unnaturally. The next thing is to taper the grip so the fingers can get around and have the second segment of the fingers perpendicular to the bore. Finger grooves are optional and if not placed perfectly can be a problem. Simpler and better is to make three tapered flats running from the top of the grip to the bottom for the finger segments to lie against. Once these adjustments are made, the grip will usually be far more comfortable, the trigger finger will reach the trigger shoe correctly, and because the flats were proportioned for YOUR hand, the grip will be reproducible.

Next time we'll get to changes that might be needed to bring the front sight into alignment with the rear notch, and when you need to add "stuff".

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