

**Eddie Putwain** takes us a stage further on the quest to shoot modern handguns



# Get Involved

**T**here are many of us out there who wonder if they should make the leap into long barreled handguns (LBR or LBP), but when they investigate this, they soon discover legally they cannot touch a pistol without it already being on their license and the club can't own one. So is it really worth it? Hell yes, what are you waiting for, get your variation in!

Let's consider the LBP. Which in semi-automatic build is limited in calibre to .22 Rimfire, however, its cousin the long barreled revolver (LBR) is not as you can also get centrefire pistol calibers too. As the name suggests, it meets the UK legal requirement for a 12/24" barrel and butt extension (coat hanger) to make it the minimum overall legal length. You do adapt quickly to the quirky requirements! Also, the manufacturers have been clever with the design and angle the extension to minimise the impact upon movement and balance.

## WHY?

You might ask why should I get a pistol? Are you a mini rifle Jedi, just rocking it at the local club with cups and shields? Knocking out perfect 300s in PP1, smashing it out with Service B comps? Perhaps even venturing a bit wider into regional or

national events, via the likes of UKPSA? That's great, now get yourself a pistol and try it!

There's nothing like a good dose of humility to bring you back down to earth, and also to reignite the competitive spirit within. Or are you a firearms purist, who wishes to only challenge their own abilities without aids? Believe me, pistols are the ultimate challenge to demonstrate the shooter's abilities.

Owning a pistol really opens up new shooting disciplines. My own perspective is specifically from that of 'Practical and Action shooting', in a club environment. With opportunities to make it challenging

and exciting with targets of varying sizes, at different distances, non-shoots, overlaps, speed shooting, double taps, dynamic reloads etc.

## UKPSA

See it first hand by checking out the UKPSA website – they offer an excellent range of competitive opportunities, including programs designed to be shot in a club environment, all under IPSC rules. These really get the blood pumping; here's a typical stage; 4 targets at varying distance, double tap on each, mag change, do it again. Average time 6-seconds. So, you have your pistol, what next?



**Magazine going in, note position of the trigger finger – OFF THE TRIGGER, as can be seen the action is locked open**



The hand hold is made with the hand firmly up into the pistol grip, safety is paramount as there's not time your finger should be on the trigger except when about to fire

Techniques – let's keep it simple; stance, grip, interaction, sights, trigger. How do I stand?

A lot of the pre-ban shooters used the Weaver stance – at an angle up to 45° to the target, one foot forward. More modern techniques advocate face on (isosceles). Basically, a position you can replicate time after time, which gives you the most stable platform to shoot from!

Grip - Although they appear ungainly, the good thing is that the long barrel is compensated by the coat hanger, so weight and balance are acceptable. The manufacturers have shown common sense in the design and angle of the brace, so it does not get in the way! Grab your gun as high in the grip as possible; you are trying to secure a straight line along the recoil plane (base of the slide) without experiencing 'slide bite' in the web of your hand.

**FIRM AND FAIR**

Hold it firmly, like a decent handshake; trigger finger along the slide. Weak hand, wrapped around the strong one, finger down; index finger weak hand against lower strong hand finger. Strong thumb over weak thumb, don't place it behind the slide as you will get bit! Stability is enhanced by pushing out with the strong hand and pulling back with the weaker. Your arms should be tired after pistol shooting, let's not forget they are doing the hard work and taking the recoil.

Interaction - Loading, unloading, showing clear, stoppages, mag changes etc. I was taught by an ex police firearms officer that all interactions with the pistol are strictly



Thumb grip and finger position; never wrap your supporting hand thumb around the rear of the slide as it will bite you as it recoils!



The law demands a firearm with a minimum 12" barrel and 24" overall lengths

within an imaginary, 6 x 6" 'fumble box' in front of you from the mounted position. Nothing moves outside of it! Mount your gun in front of you always pointing down range; you can achieve all requirements within this box. You can twist to see each side, check clear, clear stoppages, load and unload. Discipline is essential, so that your barrel does not wander and particularly that the angles stay correct. It is easy to become complacent with any handgun, so strict safety discipline and repeating drills regularly is essential.

This remains the most important element to get right. You will soon evolve onto weak and one handed shooting, so your stance and grip disciplines may change. But what does not is the fumble box and is simply down to safety!

**SIGHTS**

Up to 25m, you have two viable options; iron sights or red dot. The dot is great for fast target acquisition, and lends itself to 'two eyes open' shooting and seems the choice of the majority of competitive shooters. I'm still enjoying irons; slower, as you have to line up the front and rear elements and also the target, but they don't break or run out of power. But when it comes right you know it's all been you, equally so when you stuff up!

Never jerk the trigger, keep it nice and smooth, however, with a rifle you are 'pulling' against the resistance provided by the stock. With a pistol, you are pulling basically against your wrist, which moves, so if you jerk, the gun will move as you shoot. This comes back to your grip of balanced resistance, a smooth consistent pull and lots of practice.

**SO PUT IT ALL TOGETHER.**

In competitive applications, the pistol will usually either be holstered or in a drop position by your side.



My stance is primarily isosceles with a tad of Weaver thrown in, but whatever you favour if it works for you then use it!

Trigger finger outside of the guard, resting along the slide. When the signal to shoot is given, punch out with your strong hand, into your weak one to establish your grip. Barrel orientation ALWAYS remains pointing at backstop. Lock the 'positive resistance' between strong and weak hands, take aim, finger on trigger; commence firing. Showing clear – it's natural with a pistol to simply relax and before you know it your barrel could be all over the place. We need to watch this; when finished, drop the mag and lock the slide open to demonstrate clear – all within the fumble box and all towards back stop.

Next month, load/unload drills, mag changes and stoppage drills  
**Contact: United Kingdom Practical Shooting Association; www.ukpsa.co.uk**