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# RANGEMASTER

DEFENSIVE TACTICS  
FOR THE REAL WORLD

*Firearms Training Services*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## ALTERNATE Shooting Positions

by Tom Givens

In the typical US self-defense shooting, all shooting will be done from a standing position. There is usually no time to move to cover, assume a lower position or do anything but get on the sights and start making hits. As with all things, however, there are exceptions and we need to be prepared to deal with them.

From 1935 until 2013, the FBI's Practical Pistol Course and its NRA police competition cousin included firing from prone. This was a hold-over from early training at Quantico by Marine shooting instructors, who were primarily riflemen. The FBI Academy was built inside the huge Marine Corps base at Quantico, Virginia, and the Marines had a heavy influence on the early training programs. In military action the vast majority of casualties are caused by flying shrapnel and debris from

explosive ordnance. Artillery shells, mortar rounds, aerial bombs, rockets, grenades, and IEDs account for almost all serious casualties. Thus, in the military on first contact everyone goes prone, if possible. The closer to the ground one gets, the less likely an injury in this scenario. Also, for riflemen, especially at long range, the rule is always to try to get lower and more stable, thus the emphasis on prone shooting. This insistence on including prone in the FBI's training bled over into other law enforcement training programs, and from there into the civilian world.

In our world of close range self defense, prone has a lot of drawbacks. It is slow to get into and out of, it greatly restricts our mobility, and restricts our vision. On hard, even surfaces like concrete and asphalt, it makes us vulnerable to rounds hitting

in front of us and skipping into us. Unless combined with very low cover, prone is probably not a great idea in the close range urban environment.

The original PPC also included shooting from sitting, but again this is an attempt to adapt rifle training to pistol use. Sitting can be slow and awkward to get into and is slow to get up from, restricting our mobility.

In our world, the alternate position most often used will be some form of kneeling position. The various kneeling positions have several advantages: they are quick to get into and out of; they offer enhanced stability; they lower your profile, making you a smaller target; they offer better visibility than prone; and they conform well to cover that is too short to use from a standing position.



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Also, they can make you harder for an assailant to spot initially, as most people scan visually at eye level. This last one applies when the opposition is not targeting you yet, as in an active shooter event where you are present. A kneeling position can also be used at close range to direct fire upward, to reduce the risk to bystanders who might be behind the intended target.

There are three basic variations of the kneeling position: braced kneeling, double kneeling; and speed kneeling. Each has its own tactical niche, and each has benefits and drawbacks.

Braced kneeling is an adaptation of the rifleman's position, and offers enhanced stability for more accuracy, IF done correctly. To assume a proper Braced Kneeling Position, the shooter must step forward and across to a line extending forward from the gun side foot to the target. The shooter sits on the gun side heel, bracing the flat back of the support arm elbow on the flat portion of the knee. Upper body geometry stays pretty much the same

as in Standing, so the gun is the same distance from the face, resulting in the same sight picture.

In training, we often see braced kneeling done improperly. First, if the shooter simply steps forward with the support side foot, the handgun must be held on target with muscular tension, which gets shaky quickly. If the shooter steps across in front of the gun side foot, that places a "column of bone" beneath the gun, supporting the handgun with skeletal structure (forearm, elbow, knee, lower leg), which is much more stable. Next, the support side elbow should be placed forward, on the flat portion of the support side knee. Avoid having the point of the elbow perched atop the knee. Finally, arm geometry must stay consistent. If the handgun is brought too close to the face, the rear sight notch becomes way too wide, and misses result.

Double kneeling is assumed by rocking the shoulders back as the gun is drawn, to prevent crashing the

knees into the ground too hard. As the gun is drawn, sit on both feet, with your butt on your heels. From the belt up, body geometry is exactly like when standing. You can lean out slightly from either side of low cover (like a large concrete planter) and deliver accurate fire with minimal exposure.

Speed kneeling offers no real accuracy enhancement, but it lowers your profile quickly. You can get into and out of it very quickly. Just step forward with the support side foot and drop. From the belt up, it's just like standing.

The photos on the previous page show these positions being used properly. Find the ones that work best for you and give them a bit of practice from time to time. You may find that your build, back injuries, etc. may preclude using braced kneeling. If so, double kneeling is almost as stable and probably will work much better for you. Find the position that works for you. ■

**LAST CALL**

# NORTHWEST REGIONAL TACTICAL CONFERENCE

**W**e try to keep the Tactical Conference centrally located in the US, so as many people as possible may attend. That's why it is usually in Memphis or Little Rock or other central location. However, there are many committed students of The Art in the Pacific Northwest, which is still a long way from Tennessee or Arkansas. To accommodate them, we will be holding a regional conference at The Firearms Academy of Seattle (FAS) in July 2018. FAS is located between Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon. It's a very nice training facility with several ranges and a modern classroom.

The dates are July 27-29, 2018, Friday through Sunday. This will be a smaller event than the national conference,

with about 100 attendees, plus staff and trainers. We have an impressive array of trainers presenting two-hour and four-hour blocks of instruction, including live fire (handgun, shotgun, and carbine); classroom instruction on a variety of topics; and hands-on training in empty hands skills and immediate trauma care. The trainers include Tom & Lynn Givens, Massad Ayoob, Marty Hayes, John Holschen, Lee Weems, John Hearne, John Murphy, Gabe White, Tiffany Johnson, Karl Rehn, Cecil Burch, William Aprill, Lori Bigley, Caleb Causey, Ed Monk, and Belle McCormack. That's a seventeen well-respected trainers

presenting instruction over three full days of training! There will also be a defensive pistol match concurrent with the training events. Advance registration is required. This event is almost sold out. Visit our Eventbrite page or click the Eventbrite logo below to sign up today! ■

**Eventbrite**





# Tighten Up Your Instructor Creds!

We have a rare opportunity to take either or both of these courses in the same week. On August 6-8, 2018, we will be conducting the **Three-Day Firearms Instructor Development Course** on Monday through Wednesday in Ripon, Wisconsin. Then, on Thursday and Friday, August 9-10, we will offer the **Two-Day Advanced Firearms Instructor Course** at the same facility.

If you have had neither course, you can take just the three-day course or register for both. If you are a prior graduate of the three-day course anywhere, you can register for just the advanced course. This is a nice range facility. If you would like an immersion-level training experience, the full five days would be ideal for skill development as a shooter, a coach, and an instructor.

**Aug 6-8 (Mon-Wed)**  
3-Day Firearms Instructor Development Course (pistol)  
Ripon, WI

**Aug 9-10 (Thu-Fri)**  
Advanced Firearms Instructor Development Course (pistol)  
Ripon, WI

We conducted our **Three-Day Defensive Shotgun Instructor course** in Franklin, TN, in May; and all 14 students successfully completed the course. We're offering the course again later this year in Lakeland, FL.

This course covers everything about teaching the judicious use of the most effective and versatile home/business defense weapon the typical private citizen or police officer can access. There is much to learn about this awesome but often misunderstood weapon system.

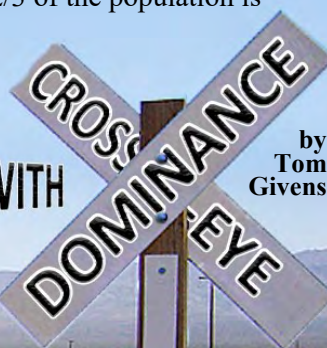
**November 16-18 (Fri-Sun)**  
Defensive Shotgun Instructor Development Course  
Lakeland, FL

To sign up for any of these instructor courses, please check out our Eventbrite page or visit [Rangemaster.com](http://Rangemaster.com). Thanks!

[www.Rangemaster.com](http://www.Rangemaster.com)

If you teach a large number of students like I do, you will find a surprising percentage who are cross-dominant. No, that doesn't mean they wear their spouse's clothes to class. It means they are strongly dominant in one hand, but their dominant eye is on the other side of the body (such as a shooter who is right handed, but has a dominant left eye). It is believed that 85-90% of the world's population is right handed. However, about 2/3 of the population is right eye dominant, and 1/3 is left eye dominant. Only a small number (thought to be around 1%) have no dominance in either eye. There are several simple tests an instructor can use to check for cross dominance issues. I'll describe a couple of very easy ones here.

## DEALING WITH



by  
Tom  
Givens

First, have the student make a small frame opening at arms' length, by bringing the hands together. With both eyes open, have the student center a small object across the room in that opening. Close only the left eye, then open both. Close only the right eye, then open both. For one eye, the target object remained in the opening. For the other eye, the target object disappeared. The eye with which the object stayed in the frame is the dominant eye. An alternative method is to have the student center an object in the opening with both eyes open, then slowly bring the hands back to touch the face, keeping both eyes open. The opening will naturally be drawn toward the dominant eye.

On the range, the clue that the student is cross dominant is usually misses that impact the target a bit high but way off to the side. For a right-handed/left-eyed shooter, for instance, the hits will be high and to the left. Another clue can be discovered by watching the shooter while they fire. You may see the gun moving toward the

*Continued next page...*



Eventbrite





# CROSS-EYE DOMINANCE

*Continued from Page 3*

shooter's non-dominant side, or the head moving sideways as the shooter aims. If you see these clues, it's time to perform the eye dominance tests described above.

With a shoulder fired weapon, such as a rifle or shotgun, really the only satisfactory solution is to learn to shoot from the shoulder on the same side as the dominant eye. I am not aware of any other practical fix for this with long guns.

With handguns, we have some options. One controversial method is to simply learn to shoot with the hand on the same side as the dominant eye. So, if you are left eye dominant, you hold the handgun in the left hand, which puts the sights directly in front of the dominant eye. Bill Rogers is probably the best known proponent of this system. I find it unlikely that a student will reach his full potential using his non-dominant hand as his primary hand, especially under stress. The non-dominant hand typically only has about 60% of the strength of the dominant hand, and is far less nimble, because the dominant hand is used far more of the time in everyday life.

Another method is to keep the gun in the dominant hand, but move the head to bring the dominant eye behind the sights. This can be done two ways. We'll use the example of a right handed/left eyed shooter, for clarity. In the first method, the head is rotated on its vertical axis to bring the left eye behind the sights. This is sub-optimal, as it points the right eye off to the right side, reducing peripheral vision to the front left. It appears to work better to keep the head pointed forward, but tilt it to the right just enough to bring the left eye behind the sights. You have probably seen pictures of Jeff Cooper shooting a 1911 in a classic Weaver stance. You may have noticed his head cocked over to the right. This was because Jeff was right handed but left eye dominant, and used this technique.

A third option is to cant the pistol inboard 15-40 degrees to bring the sights into the focal plane of the left eye. I am not a fan of this particular method.

Now that you know what to look for, I predict you will notice more cross dominant students. Now, you know how to help them. ■

**Save the Date!**  
**More Upcoming Classes**

**Eventbrite™**

**Jun 28-30**

**Instructor  
Development (Pistol)  
Ohio**

**Aug 24-25**

**Intensive Pistol  
Georgia**

**Jul 14**

**Combative Pistol  
Pennsylvania**

**Aug 26**

**Defensive Shotgun  
Georgia**

**July 27-29**

**NW Tac-Con  
Washington**

**Sep 15**

**Intensive Pistol  
(One-Day Version)  
Texas**

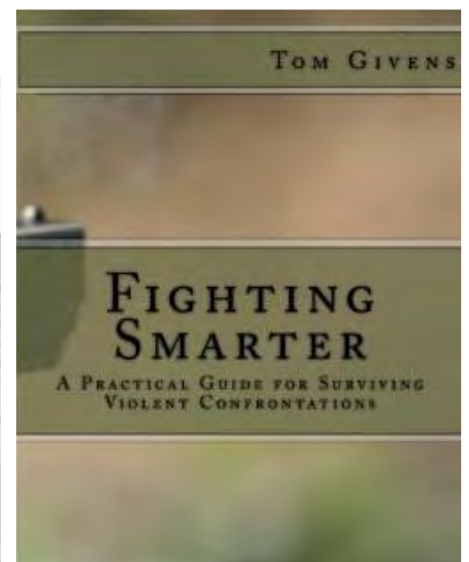
## Need a copy of **Fighting Smarter?**

The completely revised and updated 3rd Edition of *Fighting Smarter* is available now! This latest publication by Tom Givens is 318 pages, with full-color photos and illustrations. Here is a link to an in-depth review by noted trainer and blogger, Greg Ellifritz: [www.activeresponsetraining.net/fighting-smarter](http://www.activeresponsetraining.net/fighting-smarter).

The publisher has decided to stop selling books retail, so this book is now available only from the author, Tom Givens. If you'd like a copy, please send \$38.95 plus \$5.00 shipping to the address below. We accept company checks, personal checks, and money orders (payable to Rangemaster). Thanks!

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The content in this book is the result of 40 years of experience in using force. This book deals with the responsibilities, as well as the proper handling of the appropriate handgun to equip you to the task.

Tom Givens is a former police officer and a former military police officer. He has been heavily involved in law enforcement training for over 40 years.





# Rangemaster at the FBI Academy

by Tom Givens



In April Tom & Lynn were at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia, teaching a one-day instructor workshop for some of the senior members of their firearms training cadre. We spent half the day in the classroom and half on the range. Their current cadre is serious about updating and improving the firearms training for their 15,000 agents, and it was a real pleasure working with them. We also looked over some of the statistics from some of their recent agent-involved shootings and found them strikingly similar to the shootings our private citizen students have experienced. On the range, we introduced them to some of our training drills, which they found challenging and useful. Good times! ■

## Good Guys with Guns

by Tom Givens

The FBI just released a report on the active shooter events in the U.S. in 2016 and 2017. Among other information, they laid out several incidents where legally armed private citizens stopped the carnage successfully. This pretty much destroys the narrative that such events are never solved by an armed citizen. To view the report, please see <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-incidents-us-2016-2017.pdf/view>. ■

## POP Quiz!

**Who will be June Trivia Contest winner???**  
**Be the first to post the correct answer in Tom's newsletter thread on the Rangemaster Facebook page, and this month's winner will be YOU!**

In the 1920s and 1930s, there were several deadly lawmen/gunfighters who moved from various local, state and federal agencies during their long careers. Which of the following was NOT an FBI Special Agent at any point in his career?

- A. Jelly Bryce**
- B. Frank Baughman**
- C. Frank Hamer**
- D. Jerry Campbell**

