

Dry Fire Drills for Highpower Competitors

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"Dry firing", i.e. without ammunition, can be a very valuable training technique for the across the course NRA Highpower Rifle competitor. Dry firing makes use of an old training principle- frequent repetition at short intervals builds and maintains skills better than long sessions widely spaced.

The following exercises are designed to ingrain proper position building and rebuilding, sight alignment, sight picture, focus, trigger release and calling the shot.

Dry firing can be done indoors or outside. To get the most benefit, use all your usual equipment. This will teach you to set up your gear quickly and efficiently, and get you accustomed to the feel of the coat, glove, sling, etc. Shooters with M14- and M16- type rifles will want to insert a coin under the lips of the magazine to hold the follower down and simplify operation. For targets, a 3/8" diameter black thumbtack centered in a 2 1/4" square of manila file folder gives the right perspective at 18 feet. At 36 feet, a black 3/4" round target paster on a 4 1/2" square is excellent.

Offhand: Set up scope and stool as usual. Concentrate on building a good position, and testing the Natural Point of Aim (NPA). Test by building, aiming, and then closing your eyes for 4-5 seconds. When you open your eyes, where was your front sight? If high, bring feet closer together; spread 'em if you were low. Move your rear foot forward or back slightly to move the NPA horizontally. Test again. When you get it right, dry fire at least ten times. Go through the same motions as would be used in live fire. Focus on sight alignment, and reducing your wobble area. When the trigger releases, maintain the hold for two or three more seconds to build a good follow through pattern. Call each shot out loud. Really!- say "9 at 3 o'clock" (or whatever) right out loud. Plot in data book. Be honest.

Sitting: Set up as usual. Build a good position, and test the NPA. Rise, and drop back down in a controlled fashion at least five times. Concentrate on getting smoothly back to position, with a quick test of NPA. Each time, do what you would do in a match. As getting back to the same position after reloading is critical to good rapid fire scores, do at least five more reps where you reload and rebuild the position. Call your shots. Simulate the breathing and trigger stroke of strings of 2 & 8 or 5 & 5.

Prone rapid: Same as sitting. Pay attention to rebuilding, and a quick test of NPA after the reload.

Prone slow: Similar to offhand drill. Be sure to set up all your gear, including the spotting scope. Practice scoping the target, loading and mounting the rifle, and firing with follow through. After a few repetitions, test your NPA again. Does the front sight still move straight up and down through the target? Or did your position change slightly as you went through the motions? You may find that you have to build and test the position for each shot.

Finish by doing ten more offhand. Everyone can improve their offhand performance.