



INTUITIVE DEFENSIVE SHOOTING

BLOCK THREE: UNORTHODOX SHOOTING POSITIONS & DIAGNOSING DEVIATION ISSUES

LASER-AIMING DEVICES IN GENERAL AND IN EXTREME CLOSE QUARTERS

By: *Rob Pincus*

I have collected some additional thoughts on the use of laser aiming devices and retention shooting here for your review. This information should compliment what you saw in the video portion of Block Three of the Intuitive Defensive Shooting class, and may answer some specific follow questions.

When shooting while in contact, you'll want to get your firearm up, out of your holster and oriented right against your body, while pointing it at your threat. There are two key components to this:

1. Get the magazine jammed securely against your torso.
2. Get your strong side thumb flagged against your torso.

These components, respectively, give you a very high likelihood of not having the gun pointed at your own body and a very low likelihood of having your gun malfunction because the slide was not able to move freely.

There's another situation for extreme close quarters shooting, where you might not actually be shooting while in contact. In this situation, if someone bursts through a door and you're in a very small room with your family behind you, you may not want to extend a handgun out into a normal shooting position. If you go to full extension and your threat can reach out and touch your gun, they might be able to affect your aim, take the gun from you, jam the gun upwards or downwards, or affect you in other ways from being able to actually shoot and stop them. They could also cause the gun to malfunction.

If you keep the gun in close, however, in the same position I described for shooting while in contact, you won't absolutely know that you're aligned on their body. There's a chance you could hit them from a compressed shooting position, but you won't be as sure as you would be if you were touching them. Using a laser aiming device in this situation is the most reliable way to know the alignment of your gun. For this reason, I often recommend a laser as a tertiary aiming device on a defensive handgun. When you're in extreme close quarters but not in contact, using a laser to aim the handgun is a great way to increase your ability to defend yourself or your family.

A laser mounted on a defensive firearm provides a tertiary aiming method that can be particularly useful in some unorthodox defensive shooting situations. While I would never suggest that every defensive firearm needs a laser, I would also be unlikely to discourage you from mounting one on a gun after you've established fundamental defensive shooting skills using both kinesthetic and sighted fire techniques. That said, it is vital that you not see a laser-aiming device as a replacement for either of those aiming methods. Some people might be tempted to use a laser as a primary aiming device, but this inevitably causes a compromise in the position of a handgun in your extended shooting position. Consider that it is virtually impossible to see the small laser dot on a target at close range when you are in a proper extended handgun shooting position. The dot will be just a few millimeters wide at most, and the arms, hands or the gun itself should obstruct its view. Compromising this position by raising the head over the gun affects your ability to naturally align the gun, control recoil and use your sights.



INTUITIVE DEFENSIVE SHOOTING

There are three situations in which a laser can significantly increase your ability to control deviation:

- 1.** A laser can be useful in situations in which you cannot get your gun into a proper extended shooting position in your line of sight (when you are injured or the movement of the gun is otherwise blocked, for example). With the gun out of your line of sight, a laser might be the only reliable way of predicting where your bullet will go.
- 2.** When shooting in a compressed position but outside of contact distance, as described above, a laser can provide an invaluable aiming option. Compressing the gun prevents the threat from affecting your ability to use the gun against him or her, but, outside of contact distance, it is hard to be sure that your gun is aligned with a vital area of the threat without the use of a laser.
- 3.** In a situation where lighting and/or contrast issues prevent you from establishing sight alignment and/or a sight picture, a laser may be the only option you have for accurately predicting where your bullets will go. Any situation in which your front or rear sight is damaged in a way that makes them useless also falls into this category.

There are a few things you should consider before mounting a laser on a defensive firearm:

- 1.** A green laser is almost always going to be easier to see than a red one, especially against dark surfaces, at longer ranges or in brighter lighting conditions.
- 2.** A laser will only be “zeroed” to the exact point of impact at one distance.
- 3.** Whenever possible, the positioning of the laser-aiming device on a rifle should be above or below the barrel, not beside it.
- 4.** An “instant-on” laser with a very efficient activation switch is the only type that should be considered for a defensive firearm.