

## Podcast #198 Transcription – The Perfect Firearms Training Agenda

Jeff Anderson: Every firearms instructor you've ever trained with will tell you that shooting skills are perishable. That means, if you don't use them, you will lose them. And to back it up, there are any number of tactical slogans associated with gun trainings, such as "The more you sweat in training, the less you'll bleed in combat," and "As you fight, so shall you train." Now, I could go on and on, but what it comes down to is this: an actual life or death gun fight is a stressful, traumatic event that will mess with your mind and play hell with your body's physical capabilities.

Now, to survive it and to defeat your attacker, you obviously have to have these skills. But, not just any skills, you have to have the right skills. If you don't have them, you'll likely die. To get them, you've got to train. Now, that's not such a shocking revelation to anyone, but the hard truth is that most gun owners aren't training enough, and those who do are doing little more than just heading off to the local gun range for what amounts to marksmanship training versus paper targets rather than real gunfight training.

So, what sort of training should you be doing to prepare for a real attack, and how do you do it without it taking over your life and costing you a butt-load of money at the same time? Well, that's what we're here to find out.

Hello, everyone. This is Jeff Anderson, editor for Modern Combat and Survival Magazine and executive director of The New World Patriot Alliance, with another podcast to help you better prepare for any threat you may face in your role as protector and a patriot. And with us once again today to talk about how to create the ultimate firearms training agenda is my good friend and my go-to firearms training mad scientist--one-word--Ox.

Ox, welcome back to the program, man.

Ox: Hey, Jeff. Thanks a lot. Good to be here.

Jeff Anderson: You're getting to be a regular. I think we just need to have offices right next to each other, I think, but it's always good to have you on here, and this is a topic that you have to be a part of because you are my go-to mad scientist out there.

So, listen everyone. If you haven't heard any of the other interviews that we've done with Ox before, there's actually a lot of them, but if you haven't, know that he is serious about effective gun training and showing others how to prepare for a violent attack. Very tied into the alphabet agency crowd on the intel side, he's worked with several representatives on joint tactical programs such as the best-selling book Tactical Firearms Training Secrets, his must-have Dry Fire Training Cards and Dry Fire Fit Cards, the Force Recon 30-10 Pistol Course, the Alpha

Shooter Program, the Navy Seal Concealed Carry Masters course. I mean, the list goes on and on. He's also a competitive pistol shooter and avid hunter and outdoorsman, and he's continuously sought out for advice in consulting by strategic planners at the Pentagon as well as special operations personnel from the US and allied countries, and the US tactical law enforcement personnel. Now for more information about Ox and his unique firearms training approach, make sure that you visit him online at [www.dryfiredrills.com](http://www.dryfiredrills.com).

Alright, Ox, the reason I reached out to you is because you had this really great article that I read, and it was this blurb on your site that was very short and simple, but to me it was very impactful, and it was about how people really need to have a plan for their firearms training to make sure that they're not just going off to the range just to start throwing rounds down range and everything. But, you're very specific about your experience with how to set up kind of a comprehensive training program, and I think what we should just start off with is kind of a skeleton approach for this, kind of the bottom line foundational framework if somebody were to sit down and begin to plan out, how do I get better with my gun? How do I become a better protector with my firearm for a real gun fight?

Let's talk about that basic foundational structure first. You have even percentages and stuff like how to mix things together. So, what types of training should our listeners be considering for their firearms training, and then what's the best way to fit it all together?

Ox:

That's a great question, and most people, when they think about firearms training, they think about plinking, they think about sending rounds down range, either shooting paper or shooting reactive targets, doing something where there's a bang every time they press the trigger. But, if we step back and take a look at how the brain learns most efficiently, it's not how you wanna do it. It may be the most fun, but it's not gonna get you the best results. If we take a look at the Navy Seal Firearms Training Program from BUDS on up, what they do is for the first two, three weeks, sometimes more, they get sent home with an empty pistol to dry fire every night. And they don't get their first live round until they've done thousands of rounds, thousands of reps of dry fire. And that model is fairly consistent across the board in the special operations community as well as in a lot of tactical law enforcement training programs, especially the FLETCs.

So, if we take a look at what's going to give you the best results, there's different stages. The first stage, what you're trying to do is become comfortable manipulating the firearm safely and correctly, and when you're in that stage, really you want to do 100% of your training with dry fire. You don't need to do any live fire whatsoever at first. You wanna learn how to manipulate the gun, you wanna learn how to do it safely, and you wanna learn how to do it correctly.

Once you get the fundamentals figured out and you can safely and correctly handle the firearm, then we're looking at how do you build performance that

will hold up under high stress? And, fortunately we've got some really good numbers that we can look at on how to do this. Some friends of mine, Dusty Solomon and Larry Yatch and Beau Doboszanski ran a stress shooting lab for lack of a better term up in Minneapolis.

So, they ran 140 classes a month for three and a half years. So, they had a very large data set of what works and what doesn't. And the ideal ratio that they found was 80% dry fire, 10% live fire, and 10% force on force. So that ratio is very, very different than what most people do. Most people when they think about firearms training, they're spending 100% of their time with live fire, but the fact is, if you do that it's gonna take you more time and more money to achieve the same level of skill.

Jeff Anderson:

Yeah, that's really ... You know I just recently kinda came across this thing too. Because you started off with saying that somebody that's just brand new to firearms or isn't really all that skilled, like 100% should be in dry fire, just to be able to ... just become familiar with your weapon. It's funny, because I was just at the range last weekend, and I brought a new carbine conversion kit for my Glock, and I was showing it off to the Range Master there, and I looked like a complete idiot. It was the first time that I stuck the weapon inside of the carbine conversion kit, and I was showing him all the fancy stuff, and I couldn't figure out how to get the gun out of the conversion kit. Like there were so many little latches and stuff, and I looked like a complete idiot trying to show him how cool this thing was when obviously I wasn't familiar on it.

Now, fortunately that was on the range; it wasn't during a home invasion. It wasn't like, "Oh, shit, I gotta get this thing ... How do I get this ... Where do I undo the clip ...?" It really does require, it has to become an extension of your body for you to build upon that and really start working on skills. And so many people just don't pay attention to that. So, I'm really glad that you brought that up. I know how much dry fire training is a part of your life. It's something that we always talk about as well.

Let's go ahead and look at one other aspect of this though, because, there's something that I saw you ... I love reading your stuff, and one thing that you wrote about recently was that cops, even cops and soldiers are still working out the kinks in their firearms training into their third successful justified lethal force encounter, and these are people that train all the time, but it is different than just being down at the range. Because, look, even when I was in the military, yes, we would go to the range, and it was very similar to what average gun owners do here. There's the target. It might be a pop up target or something like that, but it's still not really a stressful environment. Then, we have more stressful environments, but, again, it's hard to really simulate that.

You also wrote that anytime that you can add stress to your training, it helps to inoculate you so that it's not something new, and it doesn't freeze you up in an actual gunfight. So, I'm assuming, and I know this just from talking with you, that adding stress even to your dry fire training and things like that is very

beneficial for preparing for a real gun-fight. So, what are some ways that people can do that safely, add more stress, make it fun even, but add it, make it more effective for their firearms training tips?

Ox:

Absolutely. Yeah, stress is a relative term, and what you're really looking at is total cognitive load. Or how taxed is your brain at that moment? Is your brain completely overwhelmed? Or is it just slightly stressed? And, for a lot of people, standing on one leg is stress. And the way that you can see this play out is have them do five or ten draw strokes where they're standing flat footed on both feet, and then have them try and balance and do that exact same draw stroke that they say and can do on two feet, and for a lot of people that's enough stress to make their technique break down.

You can do squats while you're doing draw strokes and basic fundamentals of marksmanship. You can walk while you're shooting. You can do lunges. There's all sorts of little things that you can do to add stress, and then once you get to where your technique is fairly resilient with movement, then you can do things like breathe out, empty your lungs completely and hold your breath until your diaphragm starts to spasm, and then practice the fundamentals. You can have somebody squeeze pressure points until you get a panic response and then execute the fundamentals of marksmanship. But, basically, the options are limitless.

One that I have people do a lot of times, and again this sounds funny until you actually do it, and once you start doing it, it actually causes stress. You have somebody start counting backwards from 100 by seven and then do their draw stroke. Have them start out loud saying 100, 93, 86, and I've gotta think about it because I don't know them offhand, 79, 72, and then hit the beeper and have them try and make a precision shot or just execute any fundamental. And, for a lot of people, that will be enough stress to make their technique break down.

And so you just keep adding these little stresses onto each other and finding ones that cause your technique to break down, and practice them until your technique doesn't break down anymore. Then, pretty soon you get to the point where you can start doing force on force and moving at a higher rate of speed, doing more dynamic movement combined with the fundamentals, and the technique doesn't break down.

Jeff Anderson:

These are just such simple things that you're bringing up also. It's very simple things, and that's what I'm really trying to get people to understand is that too often they encapsulate fire arms training with the live fire range, which requires a lot of effort and work. You gotta go down there. You gotta get in the car, you gotta go down there, you gotta buy ammo, you gotta wait in line, you gotta ... It can become a real hassle. These are very effective ways, but they're very simple ways that people can do. And we have a lot more of these coming up, so I appreciate ... That's kind of a long laundry list that he just gave of some really cool things people can do to add more stress.

Listen, everybody, we've been talking with Ox from dryfiredrills.com about how to create the ultimate firearms training plan, and we do have a lot more coming up, including some dry fire training drills that you can use right away to become a better shooter and a better protector, how to tap into the power of force on force firearms training without having to join the Seal Team Six, and how to plan out your next trip to the live fire range so you don't end up like the rest of the misguided gun owners down there who are wasting time and money without any real life saving skill development. All that and more coming up next, but first check out this special message.

Okay, we're back with Ox of dryfiredrills.com talking about how you can create your own ultimate firearms training program for self-protection. And, we have some real do-this-now info coming up for you right now, so let's go ahead and jump back in.

So, Ox, you're a huge fan, obviously you're a huge fan. You have dry fire training cards, you incorporate dry fire training into all the firearms training, the tactical stuff that you do as well. You know that I'm a huge fan of dry fire drills as well. Now, we have people out there that've probably never done any dry fire training. We should probably just a smidgen kind of explain what it is maybe. But, then there are other people out there that maybe do some dry fire training but ... or just think it's really so basic, it's just a matter of just pulling the trigger and there's not much to it.

So, what I'd like to do is, you have your Dry Fire Fit Cards, you have your Dry Fire Training Cards, and what I like about the cards, and I'm gonna do a shameless plug for you right now because I've bought other dry fire ... I think there's only one other dry fire training card that I know of, and I got those. They were so complicated that ... and it used jargon that I didn't understand, it was like really for high-level competition shooters, and it was really meant for live fire training, and it really was way too complicated.

Your cards are so simple, and they're so fun, and you've got so many unique little, kind of quick, simple, fast, easy types of drills people can do. I thought it'd be great if you could just give a couple of them for our listeners where ... just give us a couple of dry fire ... especially since this is 80% of what it should be for people's training programs ... give us a couple of simple, fast, fun dry fire drills that people can do right now that are a good example of the cards.

Ox: Absolutely. Yeah, so here's what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna ...

Jeff Anderson: And just know that our listeners can't see a single thing that you're doing on the video.

Ox: I'm gonna put my dry fire cord in. So, chamber is plugged. Visual indicator, visual indicator. No live rounds. No magazine. So, one of the drills that is real effective is called twist and shoot. What you do is, you start sitting down and draw and

see how far to the side you can twist and shoot. So, go back to holster. Draw. How can you shoot to the right? How can you shoot to the left? Because a lot of people are used to a traditional live fire range where your options for shooting are a very narrow lane right in front of you, and real life just isn't like that. How do you shoot ... If there's a threat behind you, how do you engage? And, amazingly enough, if you haven't done it, it's more difficult than you think to get the sights lined up automatically. It takes very few reps to get used to drawing and engaging in a 360 degree environment, but it's not a skill that you can manufacture on the fly in the middle of a life or death situation. So, the best, safest, easiest way to do it is with dry fire.

Another one that I really like is using the pistol as an impact weapon. So, if you have a threat that's very close to you and it, your gun goes to slide lock, either because of a malfunction or because you need to change magazines, you've got a couple of options. You can reduce the malfunction, at best it's mag change which is probably gonna take two seconds, maybe more, probably more. Or, you can just immediately transition to using the pistol as an impact weapon. And again this is something that, it's not a skill that you can manufacture in a life or death situation if it's not something that you've practiced before. And, this is a really easy thing to practice with dry fire at home. And, the way that you can set it up is just set a shot timer to random. You can get a free shot timer on your phone. Lock the slide to the rear on your pistol, press the trigger like you're shooting, and when the buzzer sounds, immediately transition to using the pistol as an impact weapon.

Jeff Anderson:

And that's something that you could do on like a heavy bag or on a bob training dummy also. I mean, you could do it in the air too, just to get used to the movement, but I think if you can have something where you're standing in front of something that you can actually strike with the weapon would be very helpful, I think, just to have kinda some resistance there as well, and just kinda add a little bit more realism to it. But, those are two really good examples of things that you can do that are simple that people can do right now. You can do that right now as you're listening to this podcast, so those are good stuff, good stuff.

Okay, so now let's talk about the force on force factor in the firearms training, and that 10% of my training mix, it doesn't sound too difficult. But the reality is that a lot of people have not idea how to go about training for force on force realistically. So, can you give me some guidelines on how can people engage in this kind of training? What should they be looking for? Is this something that they need to go out there and find a tactical course that does force on force training? Which is great, but I've found them to be very rare. Or is it something that, is there something that they can do maybe at home to kind of add realism, add more force on force to it, maybe using dry fire or something like that, that would be effective as well?

Ox:

Yeah, absolutely. So, it's kind of important to define what you mean by force on force because force on force can be a few different things. It can be a full blown

scenario, but really way more effective than a full blown scenario are practicing micro-skills with a non-compliant training partner. Practicing the technique to practicing on a bag of some sort to practicing with a compliant partner to practicing with a gradually more and more resistant partner. With force on force, one of the things you can do is with SIRT guns, with laser training pistols, you can do force on force training where you're basically practicing your technique and seeing how it plays out against a real live moving opponent who's not predictable. And, there's a lot of value in that, and it's a progression that people can do that doesn't require having all the personal protective equipment and gear that's required for full blown force on force.

Jeff Anderson:

Yeah, so a SIRT training pistol, it is an expense for people but when you think about it, I mean, God, what's the cost of a lost life, or having one of your family members injured or something like that? You could do it dry fire also, but I do like the things that you can actually see where the round would hit. And like you say, just having a noncompliant person, you'd be surprised how little you would actually hit the target if they were actually even just moving around.

So, one thing I think that can go along with what you're saying is just to have a person moving, whether it's ... They can move laterally and you can even stand in one place and just see how different it is for them to be moving, like shooting at a moving target and then reversing that. I've seen this at the range when we've done this where we'll run people along, like we'll keep the target stationary, and we'll have people walk laterally along the targets, shooting each of the targets as they go. It's amazing how many rounds, I'm talking about like even being five feet away from the target, don't even hit the target. You'll see bullet holes on the outside of the target just by walking laterally because people aren't used to shooting at an angle and things like that. So, just adding that movement in there.

It's not force on force like somebody's coming at you with a training knife or something like that but just adding movement to it. I think people can be surprised at just how much it takes your skills that you think that you have and it really tests them. Which is all great, right? It's good to make the mistakes now, so I really like that kind of approach, and it makes it really simple.

Ox:

Yeah, again, one of the things that you're referring to, you've got a technique breaking down with just a little bit of movement. That's stress. It's cognitive load. It is loading a person up beyond their ability to execute the fundamentals. In reality, most people can get a lot of benefit out of adding basic movement to fundamentals practice. And, then, yeah, of course, you wanna ramp that up to where you're going against a compliant partner, and then a semi-compliant partner, and then a completely non-compliant partner. But, it's a progression, and if you go too fast, you're not gonna get any benefit out of it. It's just gonna be a fun experience. Or a frustrating experience. But, if you want to train in a way that's going to actually help you in a life or death situation, you wanna ramp it up slowly so that your technique doesn't completely implode with the stress that you're training under.

Jeff Anderson:

Yeah, really good point. Really good point. Because just screwing it all up doesn't necessarily build the skills that you're trying to do, and taking it slow and figuring out each component and where it's breaking down and then kinda keep going over that area where it is breaking down helps you kinda bridge on over to actually having mastery of that skill. That's awesome.

So, Ox, let's bring it all together now. So, the last thing, this is where most people wanna end up is at the live fire range where you're trying to get good training at the live fire range. There is benefit to this, as much as we talk about dry fire training and things like that, there is benefit to going to the live fire range, feeling the bang go off in your hand. That is realism as well, even though you might not have ... might not have. Hopefully you don't have somebody live running at you as you're at the live fire range. But, nonetheless, what can somebody do down at the live fire range to make it an effective training session? How does it fit together with the rest of the training program agenda that you've been talking about here? How do they go ahead and fine tune all this for use down at the live fire range?

Ox:

Yeah, that's a great point. The majority of firearms training skills you can do dry, or you can practice dry, including recoil management. And the reason for that is recoil management is determined by your grip on the gun, and if you continually practice the correct grip in dry fire and execute it in live fire, you're going to have the recoil management that you want.

Timing is another issue. You need live fire for that. Kinda, the 10,000 foot view on this is, what's the ... from a training perspective, what's the purpose of live fire? The purpose of live fire is to verify and validate the practice that you've done in dry fire, and so there's no one size fits all, 100 round training session. What I suggest is that when people go to the range and do live fire, if they're doing it for training, what they want to practice at the range is what they've been doing in dry fire.

So, you use it to benchmark, and you use it to graph your performance or your gains over time. The flip side of this is, shooting's fun, and it doesn't need to be all work, it doesn't need to be all serious. Personally, what I do is, I've got the gun that I carry on a daily basis, and whenever, I shoot with it, I'm shooting seriously. I've got other guns that if I'm gonna go out and plink and have fun, those are the guns I shoot. And, so it's kind of the whole joke of this one's for fighting, this one's for fun. A little bit different application. But, it's kinda the same thing. In my mind there's a delineation between just going to the range and having fun with guns, which there's definitely a place for, and I don't wanna ever discourage people from doing that, and then there's serious training where you're trying to improve your performance in a high stress shooting situation.

I didn't directly answer the question with the 100 rounds, but does that kind of answer the question?



Jeff Anderson:

Yeah, it totally does. It's really about customizing your experience and customizing your training, which I think is better than a one-size-fits-all type of an approach. But, if people are following this approach where they are doing dry fire training and making their mistakes at home at their, I call it the home tactical range, then once you get those down in dry fire, because you should be working on those, verifying it at the range. Don't just assume, oh, I've got it down with dry fire with my SIRT pistol or with my unloaded gun or whatever. Just adding a bang in your hand and having recoil and things like that could be enough stress for that to break down again. So, it's a great verification of going to the range for a specific purpose. But, it really is customized. It really matters what people are screwing up at home or have been working on. And then what I would tell people is go there with a plan. Don't just go there with a bucket of rounds and your firearm and say, "Okay, what am I gonna do today?"

I think that the more that people really do care about protecting themselves and their family, you should have a plan. I think this provides a really good skeleton, it provides a good structure. Your Dry Fire Cards eliminate any of the creativity needed by people to figure out what drills can they do at home that are fun that will expose the problems that they have that will kind of get them used to different things that they can't get done at the live fire range. Like you said, like twisting, turning, moving, things like that, adding stress to it. Everybody that's listening should sit down and really map out what your program is. Get Ox's Dry Fire Cards. Just get them. They're a must have. They're not expensive. They're super cheap. And everybody that owns a gun needs to have them. So, these are really fun ways to show what you should be working on. The live fire range is that step of verifying all of that. So, I really appreciate all that ... this is really, really good stuff.

Listen, everybody, you can go over to [dryfiredrills.com](http://dryfiredrills.com) and you'll see exactly what I'm talking about. So, you can get the cards there. Just get them, and check out other training that Ox has as well. He's one of those writers out there that puts so much thought and effort into what he writes about. And they're very realistic. I'm an avid reader of everything that he puts out as articles because they're really based upon his experience and his working with other people, from soldiers and law enforcement, everybody else. He's just a real thinker when it comes to this stuff, and I can't say enough, not just because he's my friend but because his products are really just top-notch. So, go start your journey over at [www.dryfiredrills.com](http://www.dryfiredrills.com).

And until our next Modern Combat and Survival broadcast, this is Jeff Anderson saying, "Prepare, Train, and Survive."