

Podcast #224 Transcription: Advanced Dry-Fire Training Tips

Jeff Anderson: Okay, like me I'm sure you've seen more than your share of those old kung-fu movies. Our would be martial arts master climbs a mountain, and then has to wait outside the Shaolin temple in the wind and rain for three nights before the wise master agrees to teach him. Then, his lessons are just some mundane task that seems like it has nothing to do with fighting at all. Now, just like Daniel-san in the Karate Kid, who learned that wax on and wax off were actually teaching him martial arts, there's something to be said for seemingly dull, repetitive tasks that ingrain basic skills that can save your life.

Now, the good news is, is that life is not a kung-fu movie, and these same training tricks work just as well for your firearms training as they do for taking on the rival China Town gang. I'm talking about drive fire practice with your weapon. Now, you probably don't need anyone to teach you more about the basics of dry fire, we've talked about this several times on the program. But, most people view dry fire as another one of those things that we should be doing, but it just sounds dull and boring and there really isn't this loud bang or a bullet flying down range, so most people aren't doing it.

But, what if I told you that there's some advanced dry fire tactics that could really be upping your game, and that they are anything but boring. They might just be the difference between life or death in a real gun fight, and that's what we're here to discuss.

Hello everyone, this is Jeff Anderson, editor for Modern Combat & 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 a protector and a patriot. Today we're talking about dry fire tactics with Nick Rian of Ghost Ring Tactical. Nick, welcome to the program.

Nick Rians: Thank you Jeff, good to be here.

Jeff Anderson: All right guys, now listen, this is the first time Nicks been on our program and you're definitely going to want, he's going to be someone I know is going to be on in the future as well. He's got a lot of great training out there. He's a former US Marine with the Golf 24 infantry battalion. He is an urban warfare specialist, a rifle range instructor, and a close combat instructor. He's also an expert in squad tactics and a former police officer to boot. He's an NRA certified instructor and was also an instructor at the firearms training and sure fire institute, and if that doesn't make you feel exhausted just thinking about all that training, he's also a martial artist with a background in Muay Thai, Brazilian jujitsu, kempo boxing, and Krav Maga.

Now, to learn more about Nick and his training, and he's got a lot of it to share, definitely go check out his website over at www.ghostingtactical.com. Nick, we talk about dry fire training a lot with our audience because I really believe in it's importance in being able to help you really get you past like owning a gun, and I've had enough people on our range when we're instructing people that, you know, so many of the basics are what's failing and they're trying to come for advanced training. Like, sometimes those topics. What we find is that so often the basics that could be done in dry fire without live rounds, somebody using that, is really, really powerful.

The problem is I think most people just if, like I said, if there's no bang going on and no bullet coming out, it seems boring. Most people aren't doing it. What I wanted to get from you first is how do we get people into dry fire? How do we make this, what are some tips that you have for audience to make dry fire finally a part of their firearms training platform, for their program?

Nick Rians:

No, that's a great question Jeff. What we've seen over the years with people is we as human beings, we're creatures of routine. If we're able to actually get ourselves into a routine of doing dry fire, and doing all the other training that we should be doing, then it's going to work for us. For example, myself, I had been doing my set routine for I don't even know how many years now. But, what I do is I get my dry fire practice done first thing in the morning. First thing in the morning I get it done. I get up in the morning, okay, I brush my teeth. Third thing that I do is I get in my dry fire. I get it done for the day first thing in the morning.

All it takes is like five to 10 minutes a day, that's it. Again, when it comes to creating new habits, really we've got to get into that set routine for, we've got to do it for at least 30 to 60 days. If you're able to get it in and get it part of your routine for 30 to 60 days, that habit is going to be even more ingrained into your habits, it's going to be ingrained into your mind, so that you will be able to continue it ongoing on.

Jeff Anderson:

Yeah. Yeah, the other thing I think that's important about that is like one, if you do it in the morning you know it's not going to, like a lot of times we get done from work right and it's like oh, man, I don't feel like working out. I don't feel like, you know, so it ends up, it's like well I'll just do that tomorrow. Then, tomorrow becomes the day after and the day after and the day after. So, one thing about it is that it does get it out of the way, but the other thing I'm thinking is that like if you're a concealed carry, if you carry a handgun concealed, then basically that gets any mistakes out of the way. It helps prime you for the day basically if you had to use your weapon during the day.

One, it gets you doing that task like drawing it, whatever the dry fire task is that you're going to focus in on, but the other thing is that you make your mistakes early. If your clothing isn't set up right, if you need a better way to get to your firearm. You should be carrying it on the 3:30 position on your hip instead of appendix because of what you're wearing. It helps you make those mistakes

now, versus in the parking lot when you're coming out of work or heading to work, you know, and all of the sudden that's when you're attacked. That's not the time you want to find out that that dress shirt that you were wearing gets all messed up with the gun when you're trying to get it out or whatever.

I think that's another real good reason for doing that. That does help people and you're right, it takes a while to build up that habit, so good advice.

Nick Rians: Yes.

Jeff Anderson: We offer, I think one of the other things Nick when it comes to dry fire training is I think just with anything, like I get more business work done if I'm in my office versus me trying to do it at the kitchen table with the kids and dogs all over the place, right. It helps to have a I think a place to do your dry fire training. I'm not sure where you do your dry fire, I've seen you in the videos of your training videos and things like that. A lot of time you're out at the live fire range. Now, most people don't have one in their background, they maybe don't get there. Besides, if you're going to a live fire range, most likely people want to do live fire, right.

I think it helps to also have a fixed location or a plan for where you're going to do your dry fire, so that's like that space for dry fire. We actually have a whole program on designing your own tactical range out of your home, in your home and stuff. What tips do you have for people when it comes to setting up a dry fire space for them, what are some tips that you have that would make this kind of easy for them that anybody can kind of set up a space for themselves?

Nick Rians: No, exactly. Again, a lot of my videos yeah I'm at my ranch and doing the dry fire out there, but most of my dry fire is not done out there. Most of my dry fire is done at my house where I live. What I actually do for my set up, I actually don't have one set spot that I do my dry fire. I actually printed out, I printed out like 8.5 x 11 targets, just regular sheet of paper, and I actually have them taped up all over my house. Now, when I first did this, again, I've got a wife and kids, and my wife was like, "What in the hell are you doing, I don't want to have targets all up over the house, on the walls, especially maybe if people come over."

But, I got her into doing dry fire as well and that changed her mind. She's like, "Okay, that's kind of nice to have all these targets already up for you." So, when you first get up in the morning and you're doing your dry fire, whatever that drill is that you're doing, you know, maybe a target that I have set up behind my door in my room. I can just drill whatever drill I'm doing off that. Maybe it's a target that I have set up in my kids room, where I've got to practice prying around a doorframe and then engaging that target.

I've got a multiple targets actually set up in my garage, because I actually, my garage is converted over into a full gym. I have targets all over the place because another thing I do is I incorporate in dry fire into my workouts. I think,

if you're able to do it I think it's great being able to just, it takes away that extra layer of, "Hey, I don't have time to do this." Or, I don't want to ... if everything's already set there's really, all you do is you grab your pistol, you grab whatever it is you do your dry fire with, and you get at it. Five, 10 minutes, and you're done. Really that's all it takes. Five to 10 minutes a day, your fundamental skills are going to increase so much just by putting that extra five to 10 minutes a day.

Another thing that I do is actually I have a larger targets that I staple onto large pieces of cardboard, and some of more of the advanced training where I spend a little bit more time when it comes to room clearing and that sort of thing. I actually have my wife and my kids place them around the house in different areas, so I don't know where they're at. Then, that helps again, it helps keep the dry fire interesting, because again you don't know where these targets are going to be placed. But it also, I just I keep those targets ready to rock and roll so that again all we've got to do is pull them out, place them somewhere, and then [inaudible 00:09:58] go.

Jeff Anderson:

Yeah. Yeah, you're right, I mean set up sucks right. Like, set up for anything I think just sucks, so if it's already there you're right. I mean, make it as easy as, like remove those obstacles, remove those barriers that can be used as excuses for procrastination, right. It makes total sense, yeah. Nick, when we talk about any type of firearm training, like I get, I'm trying not to get into a rant here over how much it bothers me the way that people train at the live fire range. But, when people look at that as like this is the main way to train, this is, like it's tried, true, traditional, it bothers me because it's just not realistic, right.

We talk about how they're two dimensional targets, they're obviously not shooting back at you. They're not moving. It's usually in well lit ... so, all the things that you're not going to face in a gun fight are usually pretty much there at the live fire range. With dry fire you can get a lot more creative with it, and so we try and urge people to make your training as realistic as possible, but I wanted to find out from you like what tips do you give your students when it comes to adding ... like, how do you make dry fire more realistic to try and mimic what you would expect in a real gun fight?

Nick Rians:

That's a good question. I mean, there's only so much realistic you can do when it comes to dry fire training, but there is a lot you can do. Low light situations, I mean, most gun fights, what time of day is it, it usually happens at nighttime. It usually happens when it's dark out. But, when you go to the range most of the time it's again, like you said, it's a well lit area that you never get to train at night. With dry fire training you can do that, okay. You can work on your flashlight techniques, you can work on using your weapon mounted light to see what the difference is. It's great to actually be on both sides of it when you're doing low lights.

Being the guy going through and engaging the target with whatever light you're using, but also try being on the other side of it. See what it looks like from the bad guys point of view when you're getting that bright light shined in your face

and what is it like, you know. What are you able to see, are you able to see a silhouette, are you able to see the light? You get to see both sides of it. Now, that's one way that we have done it.

Again, like I mentioned earlier, incorporating in dry fire into your workouts, so hopefully you're working out. What that does is that simulates the elevate, the spike in that heart rate that will happen if you got into a real life situation. Because again, no matter what that real life situation that heart rate is going to elevate. Can you still get shots on target when your heart rates up, okay, and you're breathing hard, right. It's a whole different ballgame being able to shoot that way.

If you've got a buddy, if you've got a significant other, practicing firing in movement. What if you do get into a firefight, where you get into a situation where you need to either move forward or get away from the bad guy? Working communication, because that's the biggest thing when it comes to fire and movement drills is communication with your partner. Why not do that with dry fire instead of doing it with live fire, that's, you need someone watching you and instructing you for that if you're working on that, but work your communication drill. What do I say when I'm moving, what do I say when I need to run a reload?

Work on those drills and those cues with your partner or again with your significant other so you guys can lock that stuff down. Another thing that we do is work on positions. A lot of times we're just standing there at the square range just shooting at targets, well dry fire work on a standing position, a kneeling position, a seated position. Lying position, lying on your side. Imagine that you were knocked down into this position. Don't just shoot from those positions, but imagine you were knocked down into those positions, can you still draw your weapon? Okay, can you draw your weapon from those positions, are you laying on your weapon in that position. Are you able to still draw that weapon out because maybe in a real life situation you got put in that position and you didn't have time to draw your weapon yet.

Jeff Anderson:

I'm taking notes here, but like there's so many good points in there that we could go down. I mean, one I love that you said you can do this with your workout. The one thing I like about that is like we're talking about making it part of your routine, right. Well, if you can tag it, if you can attach it to something else that you already have a habit of doing. Like, if you're used to working out three times a week, like make that part of your workout routine. One, it's more realistic because you're getting your heart rate up, your muscles are tired, you're going to be out of breath maybe.

Actually I did a podcast on this and I'll put a link in the notes for everybody for this podcast, but the tactical workout, that was one of the things that we talked about there for using both, whether it's self defense techniques, whatever you want to work on. How to incorporate that into your workout is really important. It helps you get it out of the way and it helps it make it part of your routine.

The other thing which I thought was really important, and I've actually I've never done this before I really like it, that most people are doing dry fire solo. If you are, I mean, if you think about it, if you're with your spouse, your kids or whatever and you're in a parking lot and you get attacked. Yes, you engage the attacker, yes you do all the things tactically that you need to. But, part of that is also what does your family do? Do they go run for help, do you, if you're in your home do you want them to go to the safe room. Do you have a code word for getting in the safe room?

Usually, and I have to say I admit to this as well, that I get in kind of tunnel vision when I'm doing dry fire and thinking about, okay, I have other family members with me. If I'm training home defense, then yelling out, "Escape." We tell people to use a, don't use some sort of a code word to get to the safe room like blue whale or some shit like that, like make it something that their brains can latch onto it and do something. Are you giving those commands, are you using those commands, are they part of what you're used to doing in your training so that if you have to use them, that you're actually going to be able to use them in a real fight.

There were so many things there. Even just like the wrestling stuff, if there are people that take martial arts training, where a blue gun or something to your class, right. I go to the Krav Maga class nearby here and I will take a training folder with me. I will take my firearm with me. That way you find out one, when you're doing ground fighting training, oh yeah, I guess I can't get to my appendix carry when this guy is sitting on top of my chest. You know, things like that that you might not know unless you're incorporating your firearm in with other things that you're doing for personal protection.

Man, we could probably do a whole other interview just on some of the things that you said there, but I just wanted to bring some attention to it because there's some really good things there. Nick, here's one of the things though okay, right. We can simulate training as much as we can at home I think, but attacks are going to happen. We might have a home defense attack, sure, but a lot of attacks are going to happen in public. They're going to happen in a parking lot. They're going to happen at an ATM machine or something. Obviously, I'm not going to tell people to go out there with a blue gun or any gun and necessarily just go to the local Walmart and it's 7:00 in the afternoon. Go inside, get a couple gallons of milk, and then while you're in the parking lot go try drawing your weapon in between cars or something.

That can get very dangerous in today's climate, but nevertheless, we want our dry fire to be as realistic as possible, and we know that we can be attacked in a public spot. What are some advice you can give people on preparing for a public attack with dry fire without us either going to prison or getting shot by somebody that sees us doing it.

Nick Rians:

Yeah, I do not recommend going out in public and practicing dry fire practices. There's a couple things that we do is one, again, if you're at home, again you're

limited in what you can do especially if you're by yourself. If you're by yourself there's not situations that you can really put yourself into. You need the extra people to create these type of roles to try to make it as realistic as possible.

One of the things we do here at home is we do a thing every two months, it's called lights out weekends for my family where I actually go out and I shut all the power off to the house, the breakers. We're not allowed to use anything electronic or anything like that for the entire weekend. My kids love it and it gets them off their devices and games and everything else, and we actually do a lot of, I get my training in a lot at that point because we do roleplaying. We'll set up different scenarios inside the house where the kids may be running at me, I may have one of my kids yank, get on my arm as I'm trying to engage a target. I may even be holding one of them as I've got to kind of go through the house and clear, and different scenarios that we can come up with.

Number one it's very [inaudible 00:19:33]. Number two, my kids absolutely love it, it's like play time for them. Again, my wife gets good training out of it as well because she gets involved with the roleplaying part and the shooting part of it. That's one way, that's one way that we've kind of tried to create these situations within your house that you might be able to run into in public.

Another thing that we do is again, I've got my ranch. When we do run courses and those sort of things we do a ton of different scenario drills. Like you said, like you're standing at an ATM, you just pulled money out. You turn around a guys on top of you. What do you do? What is it like to have to push this guy away and be able to get to your weapon, are you able to engage him? Are you used to engaging from the hip, do you have to go to full extension to engage? No, no you don't. We do drills where you're sitting at a restaurant table and we set up, like I told you I have these cardboard targets.

I have cardboard targets that are bad guys and I have cardboard targets that are not bad guys. We set those up all over the house so then I may have to push back from a table, draw my weapon out, and then I may have to move and move around a possible non-combatant and engage those bad guys.

It gives, again, there's only so much you can do when it comes to a real life situation, but doing drills like that. I mean, again, most of this stuff you can do at home. Another one we do is we add a medical component onto it. If you have a group of people and there's multiple guys that are in the role play, we'll say, "Hey, that guy just got shot, this is the situation that's happening, he's spurting blood out of his leg." Or, that sort of thing, so then now they've got to think about what do I do in this situation. Is there still rounds coming down range, do I take care of him, do I take care of the threat? It really gets their brain thinking at the same time that they're stressed, and trying to give them a somewhat real life scenario.

Because again, if there's a mass shooting or anything like that there's going to be people shot, laying around. What are you going to do? Are you going to take

care of the people, you know, your daughter that just got shot next to you? Or are you going to engage the bad guy? Which one, you know.

Jeff Anderson: Yeah.

Nick Rians: Yeah.

Jeff Anderson: Yeah, the other thing I was thinking of is that if you're looking at a parking lot like it's pavement, right. It's not your wood floor or the carpet in your ... right, so it makes sense to even if you have a driveway that is paved. At least even just getting down, like what it feels like to have that kind of a surface that you're on. Likewise if you live in a cold weather area, right, so if there's ice on the ground, if there's snow on the ground. You can do all that outside in an area that is protected and not, you know, it's on your property. You can find out very quickly that oh, my dress shoes slip all over the ice, probably not the best thing to wear in going to work. Should I switch to rubber soles, should I ...

One of the things we used to do with executive protection was we would have high class Italian shoes that would have a leather sole, but we'd have a cobbler put pads in them, like on the sole, like carve out where you could put rubber so that you would have that kind of traction there. But again, if you're just doing everything inside of the spare bedroom with the carpet on it and that's what you're uses to, you don't find those things out until that moment of truth. You're right, like if you can kind of create the, like you said in a previous conversation we had just like bringing the lights down.

As much as you can simulate the outdoors that you have control over, there's probably a lot more when people get creative with it as well. Nick, we're talking about adding realism to all of this and one of the big problems I have with a live fire range is that you don't have somebody shooting back at you. Not that that's a problem, not like I want somebody shooting back at me, but just like adding realism to it. We definitely, it's different when you realize you can get shot. All of the sudden you start thinking about cover a whole different way then what you did where, oh yeah, I'm supposed to be practicing where cover goes, right.

The best way to do that I think is often times force on force type dry fire training. Whether that's with, oh with whatever type of weapon, but I know everybody's going to come down on me because I didn't give all the safety measures of dry fire where ... would I be able to recite it, I don't know. No rounds in your weapon, no weapons even in your county where you live. Have your old principle from high school check your weapon. I know that you can never put enough emphasis on safety. I'm doing that so that everybody leaves me alone, doesn't send me hate mail.

But nonetheless, force on force requires you even more to be thinking about those safety measures, but it is really a powerful realism factor that you can add to dry fire training. I wanted to hear from you, what are some tips that you have

on adding, like going to that level of dry fire practice with force on force. The best way to do that and are there any drills or anything you can give us where somebody can really kind of ratchet things up to that level?

Nick Rians:

Right, right. Yeah, we do a ton of force on force with my company. I do a ton, I mean I do force on force with my family as well. We just use basic air soft guns inside the house that aren't, you know, going to bust a window or whatever if they actually get shot by it. We use the air soft inside the house. When we're at the ranch and we're actually running courses and we're doing force on force sometimes it'll be air soft, sometimes it'll be UTMs. Sometimes we've got these other guns that actually shoot a rubber ball out, because we wanted to make sure that, especially when we get guys out that are training with us that if they get shot they know they got shot.

Then, the next time they go through they're really not going to want to get shot because it doesn't feel very good. Again, one of the things that our camps that we've seen is we'll do a course where you're, "Hey, let's go through the shootouts." You're just going to go through, practice shoot your clearing techniques. They go through, yeah, okay, they did it great, but then once we do what we call the 100 defender drill. We put one guy in the house and basically he's simulating that this is his house. It's his house and someone has just broken in. Now, the other guy going in, he's simulating that hey, this is my house, I have to go in and clear it.

Now again, that's a whole nother topic of when you should actually clear buildings, because if anything you should be calling the police to clear it you should never be doing it yourself. Unless for some reason you just have to go in and clear. What we see is the guy that actually had to go in and clear that house their heart rate, as soon as they start going, it spikes. The heart rate spikes right away, because it's a whole different game when you know that there's somebody in there, and they're looking to shoot at me, shoot me, with something that does not feel very good. It changes the whole game, you just see them start sweating and I mean they're barely moving.

They're just going nice and slow, hiding in the corners, but it gives them that realistic feel. Plus, it gets them to use the angles, because we all know with clearing buildings, something like that, it's an angles game. If you don't use the angles, if you expose a leg before you expose your eye and muzzle you're going to get your leg shot. Again, I just, it changes the whole game when you've got other people in there shooting back at you.

Again, one thing I do with my kids and my family is that we run air soft in the house, we shut the lights off and we run drills. We've got a strobe light, so I'll shut the lights off and run a strobe inside the house. We've got, we'll play loud music inside the house with the strobe just to really be, mess with your senses as you're trying to go through and do whatever drill you're trying to do.

Jeff Anderson:

I freaking love that house drill man, that sounds like a blast to do. You brought up a lot of factors that can go with it. The other thing I'll say is like when you're talking about like if you expose your leg and, you know, those are things that can come from the other person that you're working with, right. Whether you do this house drill or whether it's any sort of force on force drill, it's really helpful if you do like an after action review where the other person says, "Yeah, I shot you because I saw your leg before I knew where you were. Like, I was looking out the door and when I saw your leg I knew exactly where you were and I would have shot through the wall."

"Oh, that's right I never thought, man, I guess the sheet rock isn't going to stop that, right." There's a whole lot you can do there if you get that feedback back from the other person. Here's why I got you, or here's what I think I did wrong, what did you see. That communication is, there's a lot of learning stuff in there that can really work well. Sometimes learning the hard way is the best way, especially when it's only dry fire, right.

Man, this is awesome stuff, there were so many really cool actionable tips in this interview, I really appreciate it. Listen everybody, I hope that, definitely grab the show notes for this because we'll take all the highlights and we'll go ahead and put some of these in there as quickly as possible. But, you might want to listen to this one a second time through. Definitely go over and check out Nick's website, he's got a great membership program over there, does a lot of video training there, it's a lot of really good quality training. You want to go check that out, he also does live training as well, so they're doing a lot of tactical courses that you can take.

Go check him out over at www.ghostingtactical.com, and until our next Modern Combat & Survival broadcast this is Jeff Anderson saying prepare, train, and survive.