

Mental Rehearsal

The relaxation procedure may have to be performed several times before any benefit may be felt. Once this has been achieved, you can start the mental rehearsal skills whilst in your relaxed state. After getting relaxed and with your eyes closed, picture the sights of the pistol and imagine the feeling of the grip in your hand. Are the sights clear within your mind's eye and can you see the target at the range?

Put the sights against the target, being sure to visualise only the points relevant to shooting, such as seeing the front sight sharply with the target out of 'focus'. Picture the sights as you would like to see them against the target and picture a shot being fired.

Now visualise the result as you would expect, with the emphasis being on the performance of the shot so that all basics are performed correctly to give you the best result within your capabilities. Do this over and over to reinforce the correct aspects of shooting.

Remember, this is only one small part of shooting/training. It is in no way intended to take the place of practice or used as a 'prop' when there is a lack of training. A shooter must have a knowledge of all the basic skills and be able to perform these at a reasonable level to gain any benefit of mental rehearsal. You may want to set yourself up with a pistol close by so that you can feel the pistol during rehearsals. Set it up by your side within easy reach of your non shooting hand so that it can be placed into your shooting hand.

Rehearsals

After relaxation, stay in the position you are in and with the eyes still closed begin the rehearsals. Make the shape of the grip with your hand. Imagine you are holding the pistol. You can feel the contours of the grip in the hand. Let the trigger finger fall naturally onto the trigger shoe. Note how the thumb feels, it feels loose and sits comfortably on the grip. You feel good about your grip. Now pick up the pistol and place it in your hand. Don't hold the pistol tight, just feel the contours of the grip. Imagine you are pointing the pistol at a target. Notice how light it feels.

You can almost feel your arm raising in the air. Without forcing it, notice if the hand and arm 'want' to lift off your stomach. Can you feel it getting lighter? It's like a string is attached to the pistol and is being lifted. Let the pistol rest again on your stomach. Note how relaxed the arm feels and hold the pistol loosely. Put the pistol away and relax. With your eyes still closed and feeling calm, can you picture the sights?

Picture yourself at the firing line. Picture yourself pointing the pistol at the target, your target. Can you notice the forearm, hand and sights? Can you picture the sights? Can you see the shape of the sights? See how square they are and how big they appear. Notice how the sights seem to sit so still on the target. So still in fact that it appears that there is a 'steel' bar going through the forearm, wrist and pistol through to the target. Can you feel how light the pistol feels? Picture yourself resting the pistol as you prepare for your next shot.

Imagine that you load the pistol and raise it. Feel the trigger. The pistol settles onto the target and you see the sights so clearly, so sharp and aligned. You feel the trigger whilst concentrating on the sights. The shot breaks, you see the recoil and feel it going up the arm and into the shoulder. You watch the sights through the shot and into recoil. The result was

a good shot. Re-load, do some breathing, raise the arm. Picture the sights sitting on the target. Note how light the pistol feels.

See the sights clearly in your 'minds eye' and see the shot break. Another good result. Re-load. Those two shots felt good the way they recoiled up the arm and the sights were so clear and sharp. Fire some more shots and pack the pistol away 'mentally' after the range officer has cleared it and see the total result as the best you have ever shot.

Count from 1 through to 10. Keep your eyes closed until you reach 10.

1 You have packed your pistol away.

2 You feel pleased with the results achieved.

3 You feel confident and assertive.

4 You begin to move your fingers to gently clench your fists, not tightly.

5 Move your toes and feet slightly.

6 Start breathing slightly faster and slightly deeper than you are now. Each time you breathe in, you think about the results you have just achieved and how good they felt.

7 Move your eyebrows up and down slowly and start moving your arms slightly. All the time thinking of how confident and assertive you are because you just shot your best score.

8 You are still breathing slightly faster than normal and you start to wake up.

9 Think of how you want to feel when you wake up. Do you want to feel relaxed but alert? If you do, slow your breathing down and start breathing from your stomach. If you want to feel alert, ready to go, assertive and confident, breathe slightly faster in the upper part of the chest. Say the words in your mind, "I am confident, assertive and ready to go". You can feel yourself beginning to become wide awake.

10 Open your eyes, blink several times and get up when you want to, but very slowly.