

Dry Fire Trigger Press

A clean press adds no movement of its own — it only works inside the sights' natural wobble. Learn to see the difference between wobble and press-induced movement.

Focus

Front sight (irons) or target (red dot) through the click and follow-through.

Reps

10–20 focused reps. Stop when form degrades.

Gear

Coin on the slide, laser trainer, or video to expose movement.

PRINCIPLE

The sights or dot always wobble a little. A smooth press keeps the shot inside that natural wobble. The press must add no movement of its own.

PASS / FAIL

A rep fails if the press adds movement beyond the natural wobble: a jump, dip, or shift during the press, the click, or the follow-through. Wobble that stays the same size before, during, and after the click is a pass. Since nothing hits the wall, the sights or dot are your only evidence.

ERRORS AND FIXES

Milking the grip

The other fingers tighten or pump with the trigger finger. Sights or dot move low-left (right-handed) or low-right (left-handed) as you press.

Fix. Set a firm grip before the press and hold it unchanged through follow-through. Practice moving only the trigger finger while watching for any tightening in the rest of the hand.

Jerk or slap

Too much pressure too fast, or hitting the trigger when the sights or dot look right. Also low-left / low-right.

Fix. Accept the wobble and don't chase a perfectly still sight or dot. Take up the slack lightly, then build pressure at a steady, continuous rate from the wall.

Anticipation

There is no recoil, so this is bracing for the click. The sights or dot dip low just before the break, for both hands. If the dip outweighs the sideways drift, anticipation is part of it.

Fix. Don't time the click. Keep your visual focus where it belongs and let the pressure build at an even rate until the break happens.

Finger placement

Contact too deep or shallow, or at an angle, pushes the sights or dot sideways, left or right.

Fix. Use the center of the fingertip pad and adjust until the sights or dot stop shifting at the click.

EYES AND CALLING IT

Iron sights

Focus on the front sight through the click and follow-through. Not the target, not the rear sight notch. The front sight is where the information is. If your focus drifts to the target at the break, you've lost the one reference that tells you whether the press added movement.

Red dot

Stay target-focused. Your eyes go to the dot on the wall, and you let the optic's dot float over it. Don't track the glass-bound dot with your eyes — that's how you start steering it, and steering is just another form of anticipation.

Call your shot out loud — where was the sight or dot at the click? If your call matches what you actually see, the press was clean. If you can't call it, or your call is off, your eyes almost certainly shifted at the break. With iron sights, the shift is usually from front sight to target — you peek to see if you hit, and the peek itself moves the gun. With a red dot, it's the opposite: you chase the dot instead of trusting it to float. Either way, the eye movement and the gun movement happen together, so you can't catch one without the other. That's exactly why the call matters — it forces you to stay on target through the click instead of checking your work mid-rep.

SETUP

Unload the gun, then check the chamber and magazine well a second time. Remove all ammo from the room and point at a safe backstop. A true surprise break isn't possible on an empty gun, so aim for an even, unhurried press. Use a coin on the slide, a laser trainer, or video to expose any movement the press adds. Do 10–20 focused reps and stop when form degrades.

CAVEATS

A clean finger doesn't save the rep if the hand is milking. Watch both. Left-handed shooters mirror the sideways direction only — downward movement stays low for both. The dry-fire dot or small target on the wall sets the standard: a smaller one demands less wobble and a slower press. A red dot makes the wobble look bigger, so accept it and press smoothly. Dry fire builds the mechanics. Confirm them at the range, since only live fire shows recoil anticipation and real shot placement.