Shooting Positions

It is highly unlikely, not to mention inadvisable, that a law enforcement officer would be engaged in a deadly force confrontation standing in the open in a pristine, static stance. Whether in order to make themselves a smaller target, to take advantage of terrain or cover, or to create a stable platform for a more precise shot, it is necessary that students be instructed in the skill of shooting from a variety of positions. In addition to their accuracy, students' ability to perform all reloads and clear malfunctions from each position must be addressed. This may result in the need to reposition magazine pouches or other equipment for accessibility.

We will be addressing three kneeling positions and two prone positions commonly used for shooting. As in all aspects of shooting, slight adjustments from the *ideal* must be made to accommodate each student's body style.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTE: The physical differences in the length of each student's legs, arms, and torsos can create safety issues when teaching shooting positions on the line at the range (live fire). If the training session begins with all students standing on the same line, as they move through each step, some will end up farther down-range than others. This frequently results in the muzzle of some of the weapons being behind the heads of some of the shooters. To prevent this from occurring, students should note the difference between their starting and finishing positions during initial dry-fire training. Then, *prior to live-fire training*, they should modify their starting positions so that they end up on-line prior to shots being fired.

Speed Kneeling

Purpose: This rapidly assumed, low profile position allows the shooter:

- To present a smaller target to the assailant.
- To take advantage of low cover and/or concealment.
- To elevate the angle of any bullet fired, in order to lessen the hazard to bystanders in the vicinity of the assailant.

Advantages:

- Because it is not a rigid supported position (as is the braced kneeling position – Pgs. 6 - 9) it allows for lateral mobility to track moving threats and for raising and lowering the torso to permit the shooter to adjust to varying heights of cover.

Disadvantages:

- Immobility becomes an issue any time the shooter assumes a position other than standing. However, it should be noted that the speed kneeling allows the *most mobility* of the three kneeling positions addressed here.

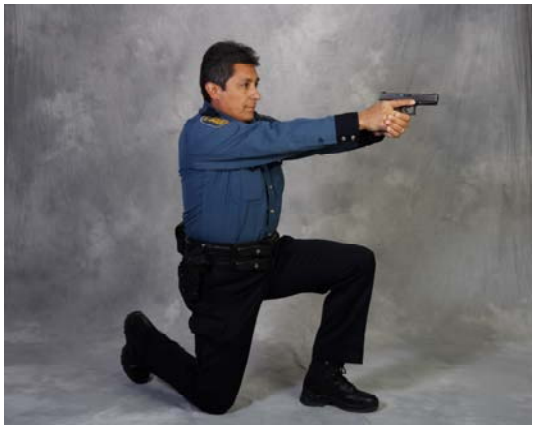
Shooting Positions

Speed Kneeling Continued:

Instruction Steps: Starting from an interview position (Sec. 5 – Pg. 3) facing the threat/target:

1. "Step"
   - *Simultaneous* to drawing the handgun, the student steps forward toward the threat/target with the support side foot. This step should be far enough forward to allow the support side foot to remain flat on the ground without raising the heel when in position.

2. "Drop"
   - As the presentation of the weapon is completed, the student drops the dominant knee to the ground.
   - The feet and knee are positioned in a manner as to provide a solid platform with three points of contact with the ground.
   - From the waist up, shooters should be in their normal stance.
   - *Ideally*, the dominant side toe should be curled up to allow for easier mobility if the need arises.
   - The torso of the shooter can be raised upright over the dominant knee to shoot over taller cover or dropped down to sit on the back of the dominant leg to take advantage of shorter cover.
   - It must be noted that the lower the body position, the more shooters will tend to lean back and decrease their ability to control recoil. To overcome this, shooters must strive to keep their shoulders forward of their hips.


Upright Speed Kneeling Position


Lowered Speed Kneeling

Shooting Positions

Speed Kneeling Continued:

3. "Recover"

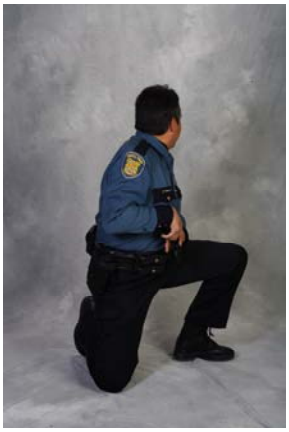
   Before returning to the standing position, the shooter is faced with the same issues as those previously addressed regarding reholstering the handgun (Sec. 5 - Pg. 9 & 10).

   - *Evaluate* (Sec. 5 – Pg. 7) the perceived primary threat from a "ready position."
   - *Scan* (Sec. 5 – Pg. 8 & 9) 360° from the kneeling position. Ensure not only that all further threats from suspects have been dealt with, but also that when standing, the shooter will not be abruptly appearing in front of any additional law enforcement officers arriving at the scene.
   - *Reload* (Sec. 3 – Pgs. 10 – 18) *as necessary*, keeping eyes on the threat area.
   - *Then* the shooter transfers body weight to the support leg and rises to a standing position.
   - *Scan* 360° again from the standing position to account for the different field of view gained by the change in elevation.
   - Applicable weapons must be decocked and manual thumb safeties reengaged prior to holstering if not already accomplished.
   - Holstering the weapon prior to returning to one's feet creates the hazard of not having the weapon in hand should the change of elevation reveal a new threat.

Speed kneeling
Scanning from the Guard Position

Shooting Positions

Speed Kneeling Continued:



Speed Kneeling
Scanning from the SUL Position

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTE: Drawing the weapon *after* attaining the lowered shooting position or holstering *prior* to recovery to one's feet creates potential hazards in regards to muzzle control. Instructors will need to be aware of and address this safety issue in training. These actions will tend to result in the students inadvertently pointing the handgun at others in their proximity, as well as at their own feet, legs, and other body parts.

Double Kneeling

Purpose: This rapidly assumed, low profile position allows the shooter:

- To present a smaller target to the assailant.
- To take advantage of low cover and/or concealment.
- To elevate the angle of any bullet fired, in order to lessen the hazard to bystanders in the vicinity of the assailant.

Advantages:

- Because it is not a rigid supported position (as is the braced kneeling position) it allows for lateral mobility to track moving threats and for raising and lowering the torso to permit the student to adjust to varying heights of cover. The lower the body position, the more shooters will tend to lean backwards and thereby decrease their ability to control recoil. To overcome this, shooters must strive to keep their shoulders forward of their hips.
- Provides more stability than the Speed Kneeling position because of the four points of contact with the ground rather than three.
- Because of the wider base provided by the four points of contact, the shooter can lean farther to the left or right as needed.

Shooting Positions

Double Kneeling Continued

Disadvantages:

- Immobility becomes an issue any time the student assumes a position other than standing. Double Kneeling is somewhat slower to recover from than Speed Kneeling, due to the four points of contact with the ground rather than the three. Yet it is still faster than the Braced Kneel.

Instruction Steps: Starting from an interview position facing the threat/target:

1. "Drop"
    - *Simultaneous* to drawing the handgun, the student drops down to both knees. Thrusting the hips slightly forward and leaning backwards allows the student to control their descent, thereby easing the impact on their knees.

INSTRUCTIONAL NOTE: An option to present to students with problematic knees: Drop first to one knee as if assuming a speed kneeling position; then lower the second knee to the ground.

- From the waist up, students should be in their normal stance.

Upright Double Kneeling

Lowered Double Kneeling

2. "Recover"

    Before returning to the standing position, the student is faced with the same issues as those previously addressed regarding reholstering the handgun.

    - *Evaluate* the perceived primary threat from a "ready position."
    - *Scan* 360° from the kneeling position. Ensure not only that all further threats from suspects have been dealt with, but also that when standing, the student will not be abruptly appearing in front of any additional law enforcement officers arriving at the scene.

Shooting Positions

Double Kneeling Continued

- *Reload as necessary*, keeping eyes on the threat area.
- The student moves the support side foot forward, assuming the Speed Kneeling position.
- *Then* the student transfers body weight to the support leg and rises to a standing position.
- *Scan* 360° again from the standing position to account for the different field of view gained by the change in elevation.
- Applicable weapons must be decocked and manual thumb safeties reengaged prior to holstering if not already accomplished.

Braced Kneeling

Purpose: This low profile position allows the student to:

- Add the support and stability of the human body's skeletal structure to the shooting platform.
- Present a smaller target to the assailant.

Advantages:

- The added stability of the position promotes improved accuracy for precision shooting.

Disadvantages:

- Requires more time to assume than other kneeling positions due to its rigid structure.
- The rigid structure restricts the student's ability to track moving or multiple targets.
- The position's inflexibility restricts the student's ability to take advantage of varying heights of cover.

Instruction Steps:

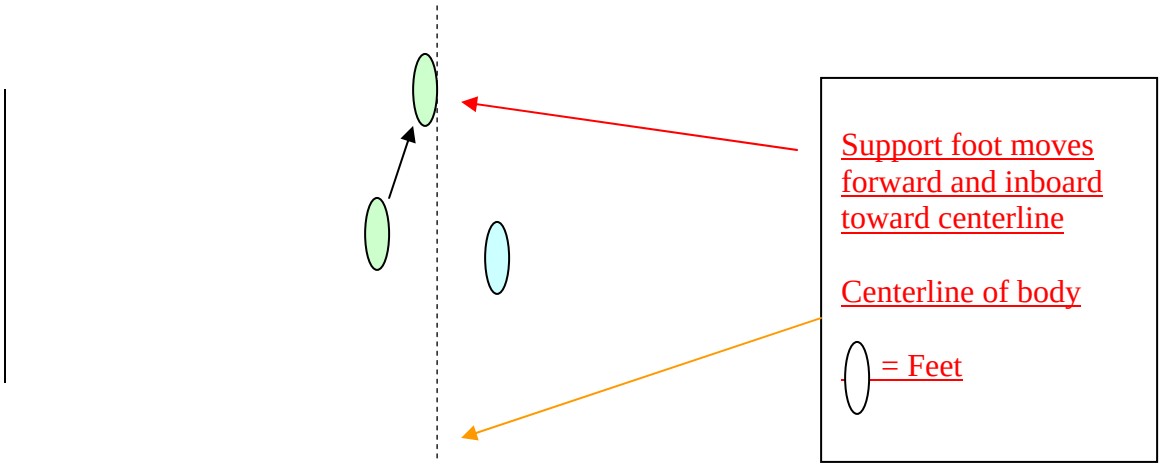
Starting from an interview position facing the threat/target:

1. "Step"

   Simultaneous to drawing the handgun, the student steps forward and towards the centerline of the body with the support side foot. This step should be far enough forward to allow the support side foot to remain flat on the ground without raising the heel when in position.

Shooting Positions

Braced Kneeling continued



2. "Drop"

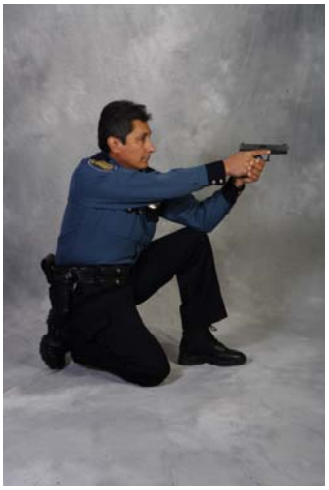
   As the presentation of the weapon is completed, the student drops the dominant knee to the ground.

   - The feet and knee are positioned in a manner as to provide a solid platform with three points of contact with the ground.
   - The student drops down to sit on the back of the dominant leg or foot.
   - The student's support side elbow is extended beyond the support side knee so that the base of the triceps muscle above the elbow contacts the inboard side of the kneecap. The hard bone of the tip of the elbow resting against the hard bone of the kneecap should be avoided, as it causes a lack of stability.
   - The weapon in the dominant hand is extended forward towards the threat and rests in the two-handed grip provided by the support hand. The support hand pulls back towards the student to put the weapon into isometric tension to control recoil.
   - The support side elbow should be directly under and somewhat to the rear of the weapon to supply rigid support. The further the elbow is outboard of the weapon, the more muscle strength rather than skeletal structure is being used. This results in a less stable position as the muscles fatigue.

Shooting Positions

Braced Kneeling Continued

- *Ideally*, the dominant side toe should be curled up to allow for easier mobility when the need arises.
- Alternative dominant side foot positions that extend the toe to allow the top of the foot to contact the ground or positioning the foot to have the outside of it contact the ground may be possible by those with sufficient flexibility. This may allow the student to assume a lower profile but slows down the ability of the student to get up out of the position.



Braced Kneeling

3. "Recover"

   Before returning to the standing position, the student is faced with the same issues as those previously addressed regarding reholstering the handgun.

   - The student raises the body from the dominant leg and the support elbow from the support side knee to assume a Speed Kneeling position.
   - *Evaluate* the perceived primary threat from a "ready position."
   - *Scan* 360° from the kneeling position. Ensure not only that all further threats from suspects have been dealt with, but also that when they stand, the student will not be abruptly appearing in front of any additional law enforcement officers arriving at the scene.

Shooting Positions

Braced Kneeling Continued

- *Reload as necessary*, keeping eyes on the threat area.
- *Then* the sudent transfers body weight to the support leg and rises to a standing position.
- *Scan* 360° again from the standing position to account for the different field of view gained by the change in elevation.
- Applicable weapons must be decocked and manual thumb safeties reengaged prior to holstering if not already accomplished.

Prone

Purpose: This rapidly assumed, low profile position allows the student:

- To present a smaller target to the assailant.
- To elevate the angle of any bullet fired, in order to lessen the hazard to bystanders in the vicinity of the assailant.
- To add support and stability to the weapon through body contact with the ground.

Advantages:

- The added stability of the position promotes improved accuracy for precision shooting.
- Takes advantage of low cover and/or concealment

Disadvantages:

- Loss of mobility; May put the student at a disadvantage at closer distances due to the time it takes to recover, stand up and change position.
- Position restricts student's ability to track moving or multiple targets.
- The position's inflexibility restricts the student's ability to take advantage of varying heights/types of cover.

Instruction Steps:

Starting from an interview position facing the threat/target:

1. "Kneel"
    - *Simultaneous* to drawing the handgun, the student drops down to both knees. Thrusting the hips slightly forward and leaning backwards allows the student to control their descent, thereby easing the impact on their knees.

    INSTRUCTIONAL NOTE: An option to present to students with problematic knees: Drop first to one knee as if assuming a speed kneeling position; then lower the second knee to the ground.

Shooting Positions

Prone Continued:

2. "Drop"
    - Keeping the muzzle of the weapon pointing downrange and the trigger finger indexed, use the support hand to lower the body to the ground.
    - The support hand joins the dominant hand in a two handed grip on the weapon.
    - The dominant arm is extended along the ground allowing the student to align their eye behind the sights.
    - Body angle to the target and leg position may be determined by the type and shape of any cover that is being utilized. (otherwise the angle is determined by student's Natural Point of Aim/ NPOA: Sec. 4 – Pg. 11)
    - Bringing one of the knees up towards the upper body can assist breathing by lifting the diaphragm off of the ground. The foot of the bent leg may or may not be crossed over the back of the opposing knee.
    - Depending upon body configuration and terrain, the support hand grip may be adjusted to make contact with the ground to support and stabilize the weapon at a higher elevation.

3. "Recover"

    Before returning to the standing position, the student is faced with the same issues as those previously addressed regarding reholstering the handgun.
    - *Evaluate* the perceived primary threat to ensure that it is neutralized.
    - *Reload as necessary,* keeping eyes on the threat area.

Shooting Positions

Prone Continued

- Difficult as it may be, it is important to *Scan** 360° before raising from the Prone Position to ensure not only, that all further threats from suspects have been dealt with, but also that as they get up they will not be abruptly appearing in front of any additional law enforcement officers arriving at the scene.
- After ensuring that it is safe to do so and while keeping the muzzle of the handgun pointed in a safe direction and the trigger finger indexed, the student lifts their body to the double kneeling position using the support hand.
- *Scan* 360° from the kneeling position to account for the different field of view gained by the change in elevation.
- The student moves the support side foot forward, assuming the Speed Kneeling position.
- *Then* the student transfers body weight to the support leg and rises to a standing position.
- *Scan* 360° again from the standing position to account for the different field of view gained by the change in elevation.
- Applicable weapons must be decocked and manual thumb safeties reengaged prior to holstering if not already accomplished.

Rollover Prone

This low profile position allows the student to:

- To present a smaller target to the assailant.
- To elevate the angle of any bullet fired, in order to lessen the hazard to bystanders in the vicinity of the assailant.
- To add support and stability to the weapon through body contact with the ground.
- Modify the Prone Position to allow for an even lower firing position offering opportunity to shoot under low openings in cover.

Advantages:

- The added stability of the position promotes improved accuracy for precision shooting.
- Takes advantage of low cover and/or concealment.

Disadvantages:

- Loss of mobility; May put the student at a disadvantage at closer distances due to the time it takes to recover, stand up and change position.

Shooting Positions

Rollover Prone Continued

- Position restricts student's ability to track moving or multiple targets.
- The position's inflexibility restricts the student's ability to take advantage of varying heights/types of cover.

Instruction Steps: Starting from an interview position facing the threat/target:

1. "Kneel"
    - *Simultaneous* to drawing the handgun, the student drops down to both knees. Thrusting the hips slightly forward and leaning backwards allows the student to control their descent, thereby easing the impact on their knees.

2. "Drop"
    - Keeping the muzzle of the weapon pointing downrange and the trigger finger indexed, use the support hand to lower the body to the ground.
    - The support hand joins the dominant hand in a two handed grip on the weapon.
    - The dominant arm is extended along the ground allowing the student to align their eye behind the sights.
    - Body angle to the target and leg position may be determined by the type and shape of any cover that is being utilized.
    - Roll the body to the dominant side while bringing the support side knee up toward the chest to assist breathing by lifting the diaphragm off the ground. The foot of the bent leg may or may not be crossed over the back of the opposing knee.
    - Canting the weapon over to the side to match the angle of the body allows the eye to remain aligned with the sights.
    - Depending upon body configuration and terrain, the support hand grip may be adjusted to make contact with the ground to support and stabilize the weapon at a higher elevation.

Shooting Positions

Rollover Prone Continued

Adapting Prone to Cover

3. "Recover"

   Before returning to the standing position, the student is faced with the same issues as those previously addressed regarding reholstering the handgun.

   - *Evaluate* the perceived primary threat to ensure that it is neutralized.
   - *Reload as necessary,* keeping eyes on the threat area.
   - Difficult as it may be, it is important to *Scan* 360° before raising from the Prone Position to ensure not only, that all further threats from suspects have been dealt with, but also that as they get up they will not be abruptly appearing in front of any additional law enforcement officers arriving at the scene.

Shooting Positions

Rollover Prone Continued:

- After ensuring that it is safe to do so and while keeping the muzzle of the handgun pointed in a safe direction and the trigger finger indexed, the student lifts their body to the double kneeling position using the support hand.
- *Scan* 360° from the kneeling position to account for the different field of view gained by the change in elevation.
- The student moves the support side foot forward, assuming the Speed Kneeling position.
- *Then* the student transfers body weight to the support leg and rises to a standing position.
- *Scan* 360° again from the standing position to account for the different field of view gained by the change in elevation.
- Applicable weapons must be decocked and manual thumb safeties reengaged prior to holstering if not already accomplished.

Each of the shooting positions can be refined by incorporating the body's Natural Point of Aim (NPOA) as described in Sec. 4 – Pg. 11