

Perfect Practice by Saul Kirsch

Book Review by Angus Hobdell

Shooting enthusiasts go out to the range for various reasons. Some are passionate about self-defense and want to improve their skills. Others simply enjoy handling firearms, or the camaraderie of other shooting enthusiasts. Some fancy themselves "tough guys," and enjoy shooting big guns and making lots of noise.

And then there are those shooters active in the shooting sports, who train seriously, striving to build skills and abilities that enable them to improve their results at the next competition. Saul Kirsch's excellent book, *Perfect Practice*, mainly addresses this group.

Perfect Practice is a "how to" book about pistol training, geared mainly to IPSC/IDPA style shooters. It's a detailed road map showing how to improve the different technical skills required for doing well in this sport.

The book begins by stressing an important fundamental point, and that is, the cliché "practice makes perfect" simply is not correct. Practice does not make perfect – it makes permanent!

Incessant training, if incorrect, does not make a champion. You could spend years and tens of thousands of rounds training badly – and always remain, at best, an average shooter. On the other hand, if you practice correctly, your time and ammo becomes inestimably more effective in elevating your shooting to the next level. And that's what *Perfect Practice* is all about – how best to use your time and ammo on the range to improve your shooting skills.

The first chapter is a general overview of practice guidelines. This chapter is very broad in scope and invaluable to sport shooters in all disciplines. Excellent advice is given in a clear and no-frills style. Saul recommends to plan your practice in advance, to set goals, and to keep track of your progress in a shooting diary. He advocates the "KISS" (Keep It Simple and Small) principle in training, and suggests shooting small elements repeatedly in order to isolate one skill at a time and gain focused improvement. He discusses how best to choose training partners, when to practice and where, how much to shoot, and how to make sure your practice continues to be "good."

The book is conveniently divided into 12 chapters, each one focusing on a different shooting skill. Every chapter includes detailed practice drills to improve the specific ability discussed.

The 12 technical topics covered in *Perfect Practice* are: Precision Shooting, Calling Your Shots, Recoil Control, Reaction Time, The Draw, Reloads, Shooting Position Transitions, Prone and Kneeling Shooting, Barricade Shooting, Target Transitions, Shooting On the Move, and Shooting Swingers.

At the beginning of each chapter is a lucid and

precise description of the specific topic, followed by a clear explanation how best to accomplish that skill. It is important to point out that Saul does not go into the "nuts-and-bolts" of HOW to perform a certain skill, but rather concentrates on conveying the most important guidelines to be followed when performing the relevant skill set. *Perfect Practice* sets out to be a training guide, not a handbook on technique. (I've heard that Saul is now working on his third book, which will specifically cover technique. If his first two books are anything to go by, this new title is well worth waiting for!)

Each chapter then continues with five or more specialized practice drills for improving the specific skill covered. These drills are simple and easy to set up in any range. No fancy equipment or special

shooting conditions are required. In fact, most drills do not call for more than a few targets, some steel plates, and a few fault lines. This is a tremendous advantage, as it cuts down on setup and dismantling time – especially if you are out training alone.

One of the most original drills is Number 28, The "Double Cross" Drill, in the Shooting Position Transitions section of the book. In this drill, Saul explains how you can easily practice your port to port transitions using only four sticks and two stands. He offers ideas how to run this drill in various sequences in order to improve your transition from standing to kneeling, and vice versa. A

good idea well explained, and a most useful drill.

Saul often states that his coaching and personal training are based on understanding the why and not simply the how of a technique. He begins each drill, described over a double-page spread, with an explanation why the particular skill is needed and its most important points. He then adds set-up pointers with the reasons for using them. Saul describes the strings of fire you should run, and lists some specific technical pointers to note while executing the drill. Each drill includes a sketch for set-up, and a small table for keeping track of scores and progress. If I do have any criticism of the book, it is that this little chart, though an excellent idea, is really too small for entering the necessary number of practice entries. I would suggest that future reprints of *Perfect Practice* include a totally separate booklet with large charts, especially drawn up for entering scores and progress reports during practice sessions.

Perfect Practice is specifically written and designed for use on the range. It is compact and can conveniently be slipped into any average range bag. In my opinion, no serious shooter should venture onto the range without it. *Perfect Practice* may very well be the one essential key that gives you maximum benefit from your practice time and ammo. **DP**

