

RIFLE AND PISTOL POSITIONS, STANDING

SAFETY AND LEGAL ADVISORIES

1. Do not attempt the positions discussed herein without the supervision of an instructor certified by the [NRA](#), [Rangemaster](#), the military, a law enforcement agency, or another recognized authority who can explain, demonstrate, and coach you on [basic firearm safety rules](#); safely handling, loading, and unloading your gun(s); a proper shooting stance; shouldering and gripping a rifle; drawing (unholstering), assembling a two-handed grip with, and reholstering a handgun; gripping a handgun with one hand only; sight alignment, sight picture, and trigger press and reset; dry-firing safety protocols; and performing shooting and other gun-handling drills safely.

Your instructor should also help you make sure your gun's sights are properly adjusted. Rifle sights should be on-target at 100 yards, unless a scope has a ballistic compensating reticle designed to be zeroed at a different distance. Pistol sights should be on-target at roughly 15 yards.

2. Remember to apply the [basic firearm safety rules](#), including, but not limited to: (1) Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction. (2) Always keep your finger off the trigger unless aiming at a target with the intention to shoot. (3) If your firearm has a manually-operable safety, it should be engaged until you are aiming at the target with the intention to shoot. Remember also that some ranges and events have additional rules.

3. Circumstances in any given situation will dictate whether the following positions or any other positions are safe. You are accountable for every bullet that is fired out of your gun.

4. Circumstances in any given situation will also dictate whether the following positions are allowed by law. Pointing a gun at someone, intentionally or not, is generally a criminal offense. Consult a lawyer as to the laws that apply to carrying and using guns for defensive purposes.

Rifle



Low Ready: Rifle at a 45 degree angle downward, muzzle level with the belt line. Stock firmly in the shoulder. Fastest to move to the aiming position. Comparatively easy to redirect if the rifle is grabbed by an attacker. Muzzle can be lowered further when moving among people or in tight spaces.



High Ready: Rifle at a 45 degree angle upward, stock in the arm pit. Slower to move to the aiming position than the Low Ready position. Barrel blocks vision in one narrow direction. Muzzle can be raised when moving among people or in tight spaces. Comparatively difficult to control if grabbed by attacker. Not allowed on many ranges, for reasons of safety.



Over-The-Shoulder: Stock rests atop the shoulder, rifle rotated inboard. Useful in tight spaces, when the rifle must be in roughly an aiming position. Comparatively difficult to control if grabbed by an attacker. Slower to move to a normal aiming position than the High Ready position. Allows the muzzle to be thrust forward, to strike an adversary. For reasons of safety, when practicing this position be close enough to the target and backstop that you can be certain that the rifle is pointed straight at the target, not above, below, or to one side of it.



Retention: Stock in the arm pit. Useful in tight spaces, when the rifle must be in roughly an aiming position. Easiest to retain the rifle, if grabbed by an attacker. Can be moved to a normal aiming position as quickly as the over-the-shoulder position. Allows the muzzle or bayonet to be thrust forward, to strike an adversary. (With a bayonet, the firing hand should grab the front of the stock, to prevent breaking the grip).



Conventional Aiming Position: Both hands pull the stock firmly into the shoulder. Cheek firmly on the stock. Weight on balls of the feet.

Pistol (Thanks to competitive shooter Carmen Lout for her photos.)



Low Ready: Pistol at a 45 degree angle downward, muzzle level with the belt line. Fastest to move to the aiming position. Comparatively easier to redirect if the pistol is grabbed by an attacker. Muzzle can be lowered further when moving among people or in tight spaces.



Modified Low Ready: Useful in tight spaces, when the muzzle must be lowered for reason of safety. Comparatively easy to redirect and retain if grabbed by an attacker.



High Ready: Pistol at a 45 degree angle upward. Slower to move to the aiming position than the Low Ready position. Muzzle lower than the eyes, so as to not block vision. Muzzle can be raised when moving among people or in tight spaces. Comparatively difficult to control if grabbed by attacker. For reasons of safety, not allowed on some ranges.



Retention: Useful in tight spaces when the pistol must be in roughly an aiming position. Comparatively easy to redirect and retain if grabbed by an attacker.



Conventional Aiming Position: Arms extended, elbows not locked. Both hands grip the pistol firmly, the support hand slightly more strongly than the firing hand. Weight on balls of the feet.

