

# 360-DEGREE BATTLE SPACE

WEAPONS POSTURES AND SHOOTING POSITIONS FOR THE REAL WORLD  
BY DANNY PRITBOR / PHOTOS BY JESSE CLEMENTS



## THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IS A 360-DEGREE ANIMAL.

This means all directions, including overhead and quite possibly the terrain below. It is ever-changing.

When given the opportunity to train and operate in such environments, you quickly realize how unforgiving it is. It is a world of deadly cross-angles, and your mind processes huge amounts of data as you traverse through the environment. You are scanning for threats and identifying locations that may serve as suitable cover. Sometimes that means you may have to rapidly get into shooting positions for which you did not consistently train.

Danny Pritobr shows the urban prone leftside-rifle position





■ This is the extended ready-rifle position.

## THE DRILLS

### DRY DRILL 1

SIRT or Cleared Weapon

This is a continuous drill: Transition smoothly to each position. Place weapons with safeties on safe while transitioning.

- Four shots from the standing position
- Four shots from the squat position
- Four shots from the supine position
- Four shots from the rollover prone (left side)
- Four shots from the rollover prone (right side)
- Four shots from the standard prone position (on your supine)
- Four shot from the supine position

Reload from supine, move to a kneeling position, check 6 o'clock (rear) and stand while scanning for threats.

\*As you drill, work reloads and malfunction drills into each position.

### DRILL 2

SIRT or Cleared Weapon

180-Degree Shift Drill

The goal is to keep lower body movement as minimal as possible. When conducting this drill from the standing position, the support side leg will start in the forward position, After the shift, it becomes the leg positioned in the rear. Adjust your feet for a proper base as needed.

Four shots from the standing position, scan and check 6 o'clock, shift position 180 degrees and engage threat with one to four shots.

Practice the same drill from standing to kneeling and kneeling to kneeling positions.

Make checking your 6 o'clock position a standard before moving from cover or standing up. This is to ensure you have full awareness of your surroundings as you could potentially be moving across or standing up in someone's lane of fire.

Success in the environment requires getting out of the "square range" mindset, which is where you are shooting in one direction (maybe a fixed position), and weapons are postured for safety, not realism.

Thus, the goal of this piece is twofold.

One, you will get an understanding of weapons postures as they pertain to you and others.

Two, this will give you a chance to focus on drills that train you to fight, reload and clear malfunctions from any position.

#### WHAT TO EXPECT

In the environment, during an active threat situation or contact, the initial objective is to identify where the threat is coming from and seek cover from incoming projectiles. It may not hap-

pen exactly in that order.

We have a saying in our profession: "Movement without observation can equal death." We cannot go running through the environment without determining if we have identified our next piece of hard cover and from where the threats are coming.

When the chaos ensues, you will see most people moving frantically in "flight" mode. Analyze those that are not in "flight" mode and who may be in a scan or fight mode (just as you are). If you understand weapons postures, then you can determine the trained from the untrained and identify potential threats.

When it comes to weapons postures, many ranges, both law enforcement and civilian, will not allow for its officers/members to orient muzzles to certain positions due to safety protocols.

One thing I have come to understand through my years of experience is that the environment will dictate where I place my muzzle. I am not an always "low gun" or always "high gun" type of teacher. There are times for both, but it should be left up to a properly trained operator to determine the appropriate response and posture.

I teach four "ready" postures. When you think of these postures, think of the muzzle of the





■ The owner of Firebase Combat Studies Group showcases the high port rifle position.

## DO IT AT THE RANGE

### TWO WAYS TO TRAIN SAFELY

**1** To do these techniques without getting banned from your local range, a safe training solution is a SIRT pistol and SIRT AR bolt. Next Level Training makes these.

These training tools render the AR completely safe as the bolt carrier group is replaced with one that emits an eye safe laser. The SIRT pistol is its own system and cannot be made to fire live rounds.

**2** Another option is to perform a safety check of your weapon systems, and make sure you have no ammunition. Then run “dry” drills.

Place a chamber flag in your weapons. If you break from training, perform another safety check before resuming the session. It cannot hurt to get a buddy check.



■ The low port-pistol position.



■ Here, the author shows the high port pistol.



■ Here, the author shows low ready rifle.



## “MOVEMENT WITHOUT OBSERVATION CAN EQUAL DEATH.”

weapon on an active threat or threat area. You are ready to engage. You are in fight mode and/or scanning for threats.

### 1 High Ready

The muzzle is in line with the eyes, and you can scan an area. On a long gun, the stock is off the shoulder and tucked under the master side arm.

### 2 Extended Ready

The muzzle and sights are on the threat, the long gun is shouldered and you are ready to engage. Handgun arms will be extended and you are looking at your sights.

### 3 Compressed Ready

The muzzle is on the threat. Retract the weapon in toward your body. This would be ideal in a close-quarter situation in which weapons retention could be an issue. On a long gun, the stock is under the master side arm with the

weapon parallel to the ground. With a handgun, it is pulled close to body by bending the elbows; keep it parallel to the ground.

### 4 Low Ready

The muzzle is oriented at a downward angle; if you're covering a threat with his/her hands at their side, your muzzle would be oriented at their hands and you would be looking over the sights. For range purposes, you are covering just below the base of an IPSC-style target.

## PORT POSITIONS

Let's now look at port positions.

These positions are used to carry the weapon system in a fashion that will not flag anyone in the environment. I tend to use these positions when I am moving dynamically from one shooting position to another. One of the four basic safety rules we constantly hear is, “Do not point your firearm at anything you are not willing to

destroy.” As a professional, I have to be aware of where my muzzle is at all times. As a defensive-minded citizen responding to a threat, I need to be aware of how I am perceived when I am handling my weapon. If you draw your weapon and carelessly flag everything in the environment, you could potentially be identified as a threat.

### 1 High Port

The muzzle, whether it is a long gun or handgun, is straight up and extended past the top of your head (do not flag yourself; keep the muzzle high) with the weapon on safe.

### Low Port

The muzzle, (LG or HG), is pointed downward toward the ground, weapon on safe.

As you move through the environment, these positions flow based on the stimulus and terrain.





■ Starting at the top left and going clockwise, Danny Pritbor demonstrates the 180-degree shift drill sequence.

*“IF YOU UNDERSTAND WEAPONS POSTURES, THEN YOU CAN DETERMINE THE TRAINED FROM THE UNTRAINED AND IDENTIFY POTENTIAL THREATS.”*

## OBSERVE AND PROCESS

It is important to remember that not everyone with a weapon can be engaged. Conditioning yourself otherwise could be detrimental to your freedom.

Observing and processing information in the environment are the keys to making a good judgment call when it comes to lethal force. As an example, I am not a fan of the commonly used range fire command “Gun!” It tends to build in an automatic “fire” response.

Seeing a gun in the environment is not always a green light to shoot. I remember one specific incident in which I was thankful for good discernment. My team and I were traveling through a congested part of Port-au-Prince, Haiti when we were struck by another vehicle on the driver side. The damage was enough that it rendered our vehicle temporarily immobile because the front flare was pushed up under the wheel well. The team quickly got out and posted security around the vehicle.

As one of the members attempted to do a quick fix on the damage, a large hostile crowd started to gather. I had security on the driver side, watching the 12 o’clock position. The sun had just set, it was getting pretty dark and it was extremely hazy from the dust. I remember seeing the silhouette of a man walking along the front of the crowd in our direction. I made out the distinct shape of a medium length revolver in his right hand. The revolver was pointed at the ground as he approached. I called out “gun” to notify my team of the threat, as I brought my rifle to extended ready, moved the selector to fire, aligned my red dot, prepped the trigger and illuminated the target. One thing was not right.

I noticed his pants were bloused in military fashion into his boots. This was not common dress for the locals. He was wearing a T-shirt with no markings; as he came closer, I saw his pants were the local palace guard pants. It turned out he was an off-duty officer trying to assist us.

I am thankful to the many instructors and mentors that pounded me during force-on-force training and stressed being a “thinker” first. I often reflect on how different the outcome could have been. Unwittingly, his weapons posture and the

## OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING

Set targets up at 360 degrees and work different positions, including standing, kneeling, supine and various prone positions. Practice quickly shifting into positions and engage targets.

Being a great shot is only a fraction of the battle. You need to be able to observe, orient, decide and act on a repetitious cycle under extreme physical stress, as well as efficiently move through the environment, remain calm and make good decisions.

proximity of the contact bought him and I time. Had he been waving his revolver around it may have been a different outcome for both of us. Understanding weapons postures can help you respond with certainty, as well as allow you to articulate your actions during a debrief.

## TRAIN, TRAIN MORE

Once you have a solid grasp on the weapon postures, it is time to work on efficient movement for the 360-degree environment. If you have been through any sort of basic long gun or handgun training, then you have an understanding of shooting positions. Applying them under dynamic physical stress is another world.

We need to practice engaging targets from all shooting position, from all directions. Shoot one direction and quickly shift 180 degrees to engage the opposite direction. Do the same from standing, as you’re shifting transition to a knee, and engage 180 degrees. Practice doing this with minimal lower body movement.

Your feet do not have to be in a picture perfect shooting position for you to align sights and apply good trigger control. Practice speed and efficiency getting into these positions, all while maintaining solid weapons postures. **FP**

*About the author: Danny Pritbor runs the Firebase Combat Studies Group in Florida.*



■ The author shows the supine-rifle position.

## FIND THEM HERE

COMPANY: FIREBASE COMBAT STUDIES GROUP  
PHONE: (434) 218-3473  
WEB: FIREBASECSG.COM  
EMAIL: INFO@FIREBASECSG.COM