

Pistol Shooting

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You may not have known that Pistol Shooting is an activity permitted in Venturing. The Crew took advantage of the program availability, and courtesy of the Poulsbo Sportsman Club's pistol club, enjoyed a great day at the range. The weather was cool and cloudy with virtually no glare. That allowed for



great target acquisition. An excellent NRA safety briefing was given by the range master, and we started with .22 caliber target pistols. First, you have to learn which is your dominant eye, since that eye will be used for aligning your sights (aka aiming). If you're right-handed, your left foot is kept forward; left-handed people put their right foot forward. Lean your shoulders forward. Learn to breath comfortably and slowly. Don't hold your breath with your lungs full, but let most of the air out and relax your diaphragm. The more you can relax, the better you'll shoot. Don't put too much finger through the trigger-guard. Only the ball of the tip of your index finger should contact the trigger. Don't pull the trigger, since it makes you anticipate the firing and you'll flinch. If you flinch, you'll pull your weapon off of the target. Instead, you very, very gently squeeze while concentrating on your sights. If you're actually surprised when the round goes off, you'll deliver the bullet directly where you were aiming.

We shot everything our instructors brought from their personal inventory, including several semi-automatics of different caliber and manufacturers, and a couple of revolvers. One of the long-barrel revolvers must have been straight out of a Clint Eastwood movie. Do you feel lucky? We received briefings on each weapon, learning its characteristics, handling guidelines, and safeties. We shot from 15 feet until we became proficient enough to keep a tight grouping of rounds on the center of the target. Once we were comfortable, the coaches moved the firing line back to 45 feet and we fired some more. Proper technique at that distance was imperative, else the rounds never found the target. After almost 3 hours of shooting, your hand muscles begin to ache and your clothes smell mightily of gunpowder.