



Shot Process and Functional Elements

The Army's previous training doctrine distilled basic shooting procedures into four fundamentals. The idea was to eliminate details and only use those components deemed absolutely necessary. These four fundamentals were: Steady Position, Aiming, Breath Control, and Trigger Control.

The primary failure of this approach has been that it dumbed down the shot process by ignoring concepts that are very useful and critical for anyone wanting to shoot better than merely passing routine qualification. It also gave equal weight to a comparatively unimportant concept like breath control to the point that it has wrongly been considered to be as important as factors that really are very important, such as trigger control.

The Shot Process

Regardless of the weapon system, the goal of shooting remains constant: well-aimed shots. To achieve this end state there are two truths. Soldier s must properly point the weapon (sight alignment and sight

picture) and then fire the weapon without disturbing the aim (trigger control.) Even though the Shot Process and Functional Elements might seem to additive, this approach is really about gaining enough control for this to occur.

The Shot Process is the basic outline of the engagement sequence needed to land a hit. Learning how to pay attention to detail requires learning which details are worth paying attention to. The Shot Process formulates an approach to learning and using those elements that are actually important and necessary.

Every well-delivered shot uses this. The sequence does not change, although the application of each element varies based on the conditions of the engagement. Grouping, for example, is simply moving through the shot process several times in succession. Rapid fire speeds this up. Multiple targets in quick succession adds the need to transition between them. Regardless, the process remains the same.

The Shot Process allows focus on one cognitive task at a time. As a shooter becomes more skillful, they need to mentally organize the shot process tasks and actions identified as important. For a novice and new recruit, a simplified approach such as the old Four Fundamentals is adequate. When a Soldier decides to become a skilled marksman, additional elements and points of emphasis are added to their Shot Process as needed to obtain improved results. In competitive shooting circles, it is

Left: Popular myth is shot stringing is due to breathing. Good shooters know this is wrong and likely caused by other, much more important factors. Learning the Shot Process helps identify these more important factors.

common for the developing marksman to write out a personal Shot Process that expands to several pages of description. Such detail creates a disciplined mental checklist which becomes a subconsciously-controlled task through practice. The focus for a skilled shooter becomes a simple anchor allowing them to focus their attention on their external environment while executing their Shot Process as a subconsciously-programmed response.

The Shot Process has three distinct phases: Pre-shot, Shot, and Post-shot. Pre-shot items include position, natural point of aim, initial sight alignment/picture, and hold stability. Shot items include refinement of the aim and trigger control causing discharge. Post-shot includes follow-through, recoil management, shot call, and evaluation.

Functional Elements

Functional elements of the shot process are the linkage between the Soldier, weapon system, environment, and the target that directly impact the consistency of each fired shot. Used appropriately, the Functional Elements build a greater understanding of delivering accurate fire in any engagement. The Functional Elements are Stability, Aim, Control, and Movement.

Stability is stabilizing the weapon well enough to provide a consistent base to fire from and maintain through the shot process until the recoil pulse has ceased. This includes the hold, position or posture during the engagement and structures or objects used to provide stability.

Aim is the continuous process of orienting the weapon correctly, aligning the sights and on target, and the appropriate lead and elevation (hold) during a target engagement to obtain the lay of the bore needed



for a hit.

Control are all actions taken before, during, and after the shot process that the shooter is specifically in control of. Of primary concern is trigger control and body control so as to avoid a flinch, pre-ignition push, or other unintended reaction/anticipation during the shot phase of the Shot Process. Control also includes whether, when, and how to engage. It incorporates the Soldier as a function of safety.

Movement is the process of moving during the engagement. It includes moving into and out of positions, adjusting as needed (natural point of aim), and moving laterally, forward, diagonally, and in a retrograde manner while maintaining stabilization, aim, and control of the weapon.

Functional Elements include important concepts during all phases of the Shot Process and the emphasis will vary based on the shooting. For example, being particular about position stabilization, natural point of aim, a highly refined aim, and smooth, controlled trigger press is important for a Designated Marksman shooting at 500 meters. This changes for a Soldier conducting a room entry and engaging quickly at a target inside the room while moving. The Shot Process concepts remain the same but the emphasis on various Functional Elements varies based on the shooter and environment. **USARCMFP**

Table 5-1. Shot Process example

Pre-shot	Position
	Natural Point of Aim
	Sight Alignment / Picture
	Hold
Shot	Refine Aim
	Breathing Control
	Trigger Control
Post-shot	Follow-through
	Recoil management
	Call the Shot
	Evaluate

- **Stability** – the Soldier stabilizes the weapon to provide a consistent base to fire from and maintain through the shot process until the recoil pulse has ceased. This process includes how the Soldier holds the weapon, uses structures or objects to provide stability, and the Soldier’s posture on the ground during an engagement.
- **Aim** – the continuous process of orienting the weapon correctly, aligning the sights, aligning on the target, and the appropriate lead and elevation (hold) during a target engagement.
- **Control** – all the conscious actions of the Soldier before, during, and after the shot process that the Soldier specifically is in control of. The first of which is trigger control. This includes whether, when, and how to engage. It incorporates the Soldier as a function of safety, as well as the ultimate responsibility of firing the weapon.
- **Movement** – the process of the Soldier moving during the engagement process. It includes the Soldier’s ability to move laterally, forward, diagonally, and in a retrograde manner while maintaining stabilization, appropriate aim, and control of the weapon.