

Center Axis Relock - A Closer Look

Adapted from an article by Chris Adams

In the evolution of tactical shooting platforms and stances, there are usually intelligent compromises made between respective pluses and minuses. One stance may be arguably better for slower precise fire while another may be better suited for close-in work, such as with room clearing. The debates rage on. In the end, it is the skill of the shooter that counts, but stacking the odds in one's favor is still the goal of tactics. Center Axis Relock (CAR), a system, not just a platform, may be the next significant step in this never-ending evolution of weapons handling.

CAR is truly different in the performance spectrum, the most significant issue to the armed professional. The development of CAR was based on the requirements of close-range combat with a handgun, some of which are: the need for speed, optimum use of cover, ambidextrous ability, realistic weapon retention and performance under the negative effects of stress. In as much, the following key points are useful to understanding CAR:

- The shooting system works in harmony with the body when under stress and is particularly reliable in close quarter situations.
- The system was developed to improve marksmanship by focusing on natural visual focal points and gross motor movements. CAR makes the use of the non-dominant eye practical in its system.
- The stability of the shooter is improved by creating a lower center of gravity and a secure base. CAR is shot from the field interview stance, which makes it the most stable body position a person can realistically use.
- The stability of the firing grip in CAR offers a very noticeable improvement in recoil control, which translates into the ability to dump rounds into a target at a blistering rate.
- In CAR there is no dominant or strong side, so a shooter need not change his body position to engage a target 180 degrees from his muzzle, he needs to just swap grips. CAR lives up to its definition as a non-discriminating platform for stability.

There are four basic positions in CAR; High, Combat High, Extended and Apogee. These positions are used based upon the distance of the threat and the speed required to make deep hits. The basic four positions are mirror image for right-hand fire and left-hand fire. There are physiological traits associated with using combinations of dominant vs. non-dominant eye and hand combinations, and these traits are exploited well in CAR. Also, the use of sighted-fire and non-sighted fire are integrated into a system that allows the shooter to adjust methods based upon need and skill. One forearm is always directly behind the weapon. This accounts for the

excellent recoil control and ability to shoot very fast. Because the weapon is always close to the torso, reload/malfunction drills have improved economy of motion. Weapon retention is outstanding. Nasty combinations of elbow strikes and pistol punches, which can develop real power and force, are finally achievable. In CAR, one hand merely offers extra support, and the firing hand can fire solo with solid close-range accuracy. This frees-up a hand for the shooter to open doors, key his radio, etc. CAR works well with long guns, OC spray, TASER and other related weapons; the benefits still apply and there can finally be commonality in training among diverse weapons.

CAR is about saving time. Fast yet accurate shooting is a result of the recoil moving the weapon backwards in CAR instead of upwards as with traditional techniques. The significance of this speed shooting capability cannot be ignored considering the unreliability of pistol instant-stops. In addition, because the gun is held closer to the body there is faster multiple target acquisition due to the fact the weapon has a shorter distance to travel between targets.

The biomechanics of CAR are solid, and after relatively little practice, the shooter can feel the comfort of maintaining the various positions. This is different from the traditional stances that cannot be maintained for long due to muscular tension. The lesson of working in harmony with the shooter's body takes hold. Emphasis should be placed here on the difference between range applications vs. tactical application. Traditional stances typically are offshoots of range-application shooting techniques. CAR was reverse-engineered to emphasize stability, speed and quite simply tactical/real life application. CAR shooting drills have built-in features such as moving, scanning, breathing and checking one's six. Typical shot patterns involve combinations of multiple shots to the body and head. All of these features have survival value and are worth training regardless of the stance.

CAR enables stunningly simple yet effective defensive tactics and weapon retention and achieves true economy of motion. CAR is truly a multiple weapon platform that enables even smaller-stature shooters to handle heavy recoil weapons (such as shotguns) effectively. As such, it offers enhanced control with select fire weapons too. For shooting while strapped into a car seat, there is no other platform that can keep up with CAR in terms of speed, accuracy or effectiveness.

CAR is a radical approach to weapons handling that will benefit the patrol officer as well as the soldier and SWAT operator. CAR is a step in the evolution of weapons handling; a change away from a range mindset towards a tactical one. The mechanics are solid, the movements simple and easily learned, and the advantages worth a close look. CAR is versatile, undeniably fast, and here to stay.