

Practicing with a Firearm at Home

I can tell what you're thinking just from the title of this article. Practicing with a firearm at home? What is this guy, nuts? Well, no, not exactly. Not when you read into how you can safely practice with a firearm at home.

One of the rules of firearm safety is to know how your firearm operates. To do this, you need to know the intricacies of your firearm. It is true that you basically aim the firearm at your intended target, pull the trigger and Voila! You discharged your firearm. The more important question is "Did you hit your intended target or did you miss?" Even more important, "Did your firearm fire when you pulled the trigger?"

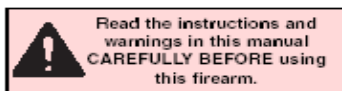
There are some basics that everyone who handles a firearm needs to know. You start with reviewing the owners or users manual. I know that most people just want to assume they know everything but I'm sure you'll agree, we don't know it all. If we did, we wouldn't be where we are in life and we'd all be living our dreams. So if we humble ourselves to accept the fact that we don't know it all, then we and the people around us will be that much safer with and around firearms.



Smith & Wesson

Safety & Instruction Manual

SW99 ~ SW99 QA
SW990 ~ SW990L



2100 Roosevelt Avenue • Springfield, MA 01104
1-800-331-0852 • Fax: 413-747-3317
www.smith-wesson.com

Once you know how your firearm operates, you need to practice with it. To do this safely in the home, you can use fake ammunition cartridges, otherwise known as snap caps or dummy ammunition. Snap caps are typically made of machined aluminum or molded of plastic and are the same size and shape as regular ammunition. Snap caps don't have any primer or gun power in the cartridge so there is no way the cartridge can be fired. This makes the snap cap the perfect item to practice with.



This practice is important because you need to know how to load and unload your firearm as if it were second nature. You need to know the feel of the ammunition. You need to know how to clear your firearm if it jams, particularly if you'll rely on your firearm for self-protection. You might even want to practice in the dark or with your eyes closed because you'll never know if you'll have lights to see or some irritant in your eyes that will prevent you from seeing clearly.

You should choose a location in your home to practice that is different from any other location where you might load or unload your firearm with live ammunition. The reason is because you don't want to run the risk of inadvertently leaving snap caps in your firearm when you want live ammunition in it. You also don't want to run the risk of leaving live ammunition in your firearm when you want snap caps in it. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. **Remember, the two (2) most common causes of firearms accidents are ignorance and carelessness.** Ignorance is not

knowing, or being unaware or uninformed about firearms. Carelessness is knowing what you're supposed to do, but just not doing it. Carelessness is being irresponsible.



When you practice, you must remember two fundamental principle of firearm safety:

- Always keep your gun pointed in a safe direction.
- Always keep your finger off of the trigger until you are ready to shoot.

When you know how to use your firearm safely, use snap caps during practice, and practice the two fundamental principles of firearm safety, you'll be in a much better position of control to keep you and the people you care about safe.

About the author: Mike Burchman is a Massachusetts State Police Basic Firearms Safety Instructor, a Utah State Certified Concealed Firearms Instructor, an NRA Certified Instructor and NRA Range Safety Officer. If you're a Massachusetts Resident and would like more information on firearms safety courses or instructions on how to use a firearm, please contact Mike Burchman at 508-361-4554 or visit www.homegunsafety.com.