

Magazine Changes

By: Tom Perroni

Whether you call it a speed reload, stress reload, empty gun reload, or tactical reload, the specific scenario is reloading an empty gun with or without the slide locked back is the point of this article.

Let me first start off by saying you can't reload your handgun if you don't have a spare magazine. So if I am carrying a handgun I have (2) spare magazines on my person, because lets face it if you are in a gun fight and your handgun runs dry and you can't reload because you don't carry spare magazines.....Well now you have a \$500 or \$600 hammer in your hand.

However No matter what method you use for your Magazine Changes continued training and practice is the key. I will also say that Combat Mindset is also critical I once had the opportunity to hear a very good firearms instructor say "If you had a person armed with a loaded handgun and No Combat Mindset and a person armed with a hammer and Combat Mindset, The person with the proper Combat would win the fight every time".

So should we practice Magazine Changes? The answer would be yes. Let's start with gear placement. The spare magazine pouch should be on the opposite side of the body from the holster (which in my opinion should be a strong side directional draw holster) Now I am about to tell you something that is going to catch me a lot of flack in the handgun community: When I place my fully loaded spare magazines in my magazine pouch I put the bullet noses to the rear so that the flat part of the magazine is facing forward. (I have found that I can reload faster this way). Remember what I always teach this is A way to do it not THE way to do it.

I train students to bring their strong hand (gun hand) elbows back to brace against their torso on the reload. As they do this, they should bring the support hand and confirm they have a fully loaded magazine to reload, once this is confirmed then we press the magazine release, at the same time they draw the magazine using the first two (2) fingers and thumb only the thumb and second finger grasp the sides of the magazine while the first finger pops the snap on the magazine holder and then as we draw the magazine out the first finger becomes the index finger slightly ahead of the magazine to guide into the empty magazine into the empty magazine well.

The magazine that was in the handgun drops free onto the ground we are no longer concerned with this magazine we have more pressing issues like winning a gunfight.

This is done with the chin up and scanning left and right we bring the handgun back to the torso to that basketball size area called the manipulation area. We should be doing magazine changes by feel or tactile sensation we should not have to look at the gun while we reload it should be an automatic response. (Practice, practice, practice) We don't look at the holster when we re-holster our handgun....do you?

If we are reloading we are moving left or right or to cover but we need to move there is nothing worse in a gunfight than to stand still and not be shooting while someone is shooting at you. (Get off the X)

Now here it comes again I will get some grief about this part ...weather the slide is forward or locked to the rear we should rack the slide. I know that someone is going to e-mail me and say: You just ejected a perfectly good cartridge from your handgun. YES I know however it is the only way to make sure when you redeploy your handgun it will go bang. You don't want to have to remember if the slide was forward or locked back just do it.

Now comes the next question slide stop or slingshot? We can debate fine motor skill vs. gross motor skill all day long. My thought is this I don't care what kind of skill it is let's get the gun back in the fight. So use what ever method is faster for you.

Once the gun is loaded we can bring it back into the fight. Just like any other skill Magazine Changes are a perishable skill so I say practice them every night with your 10-15 minuets of dry fire practice you never know it might one day save your life.

We could talk all day about Magazine Changes but this is all the room I have for this article. If you want to talk more about Magazine Changes come to class and we can work on them together.

Stay Safe & Shoot Straight!