

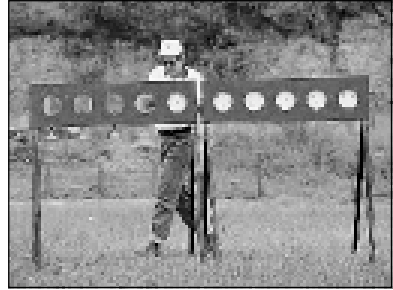
TIME TRIALS

One of the purported strengths of red dots are their ease of use. Without having to contend with sight-alignment problems in open sights or magnification wobble in scopes, shooters are supposed to be able to aim more accurately and faster with red dots than with other sighting systems.

To test this hypothesis, we ran a series of speed trials with shooters of three different skill levels: a neophyte, a club-level competitor, and a handgun-shooting instructor. Using the same S&W Model 41 .22 pistol, each shooter shot 10 knockdown plates in two five-target banks. We set the Sweetwater Industries 6-inch target plates and frames at 30 yards. Each shooter had unlimited time and ammo to knock the 10 plates down. We began the test by fitting the Model 41 with a 1.5-4X Leupold rifle scope. The first shooter fired his relay, then the second shooter, then the third, continuing in that sequence until all the scope data were compiled. We then fired the dot sight, and concluded with open sights.



Above: Shooter 1 was not an experienced handgun shooter, but he made substantial improvements in his time and accuracy when shooting the dot sight.



Above: We set the Sweetwater Industries 6-inch target plates and frames at 30 yards. Each shooter had unlimited time and ammo to knock the 10 plates down.

The shooter began a trial with the loaded 41 (10-round clips) in the down-gun position, and began the set on the Fire command. We recorded the time each shooter took to clear the plates as well as the total number of rounds each trial required. We stopped timing during gun malfunctions, but we included reload times as part of the aggregate because accuracy and sight acquisition speeds factor into how many shots the shooter had to expend.

As the accompanying tables show, every shooter shot faster with the red dots, and in all but one of the trials, the shooters used less ammo with the dots. Thus, based on these results, we conclude manufacturers' claims of red-dot units' superiority may have merit.

	Open Sights Time/Rounds	Red Dot Time/Rounds	Scope Time/Rounds
Shooter 1			
Relay 1	119 sec./33	96 sec./19	188 sec./36
Relay 2	60 sec./26	63 sec./20	186 sec./45
Relay 3	71 sec./23	43 sec./17	137 sec./26
Shooter 1 Averages	83 sec./27	67 sec./19	170 sec./36
Shooter 2			
Relay 1	47 sec./20	27 sec./13	41 sec./19
Relay 2	36 sec./14	33 sec./17	35 sec./13
Relay 3	24 sec./11	31 sec./18	32 sec./13
Shooter 2 Averages	36 sec./15	30 sec./16	36 sec./15
Shooter 3			
Relay 1	34 sec./14	25 sec./15	35 sec./18
Relay 2	28 sec./13	19 sec./11	30 sec./16
Relay 3	26 sec./12	15 sec./10	20 sec./11
Shooter 3 Averages	29 sec./13	20 sec./12	28 sec./15