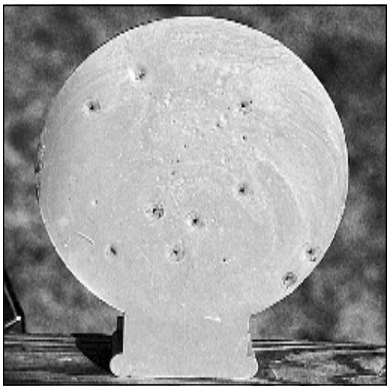
FIELD TESTING NEWBOLD REACTIVE HANDGUN TARGETS

To hone your skills before you take the field, you need to put in some range time. There are an abundance of targets on which to practice, but a pistol product from Newbold, Inc., has some benefits for the handgun hunter.

The Newbold items are soft molded-plastic targets that purport to be self-sealing reactive products. Targets are available in 4-, 6-, and 8-inch round circles in black, orange, red, yellow, and white colors. Some varmint shapes are also available. All targets can be mounted on a piece of wood or on an optional large base to be set up as a knock-down target.

We tested the round Newbold targets with several handguns ranging from .22 LR to .45 ACP. Bullet types included round nose, hollow points, wadcutters, and semi-wadcutters. We used these different designs to see how bullet impacts affect the targets, and we found that some bullet types can take a piece out of the target and leave a small hole in the target. The targets are described as self-sealing, but your choice of bullets will have an impact on how long their target life will be. We found round-nose bullets caused the least damage to the targets. Large bucket-nose hollowpoints in .45 ACP, .40 S&W, and .38 wadcutters did the most damage. In our estimation, target life would be shortened significantly if this type of ammo were used. With .22s, however, we estimate target life to be at least several thousand rounds. Newbold recommends these targets be used with ammunition with at least 750-fps shoot-through velocity. BB and pellet guns could cause a bounce back safety hazard.



Above: The Newbold targets are made of plastic that purports to be self-sealing. Targets are available in 4-, 6-, and 8-inch round circles in black, orange, red, yellow, and white colors. Bowling pins and some varmint shapes

Our targets didn't come with any mounting instructions, so when we first shot them, we put the wrong side facing the shooter. Initially, we set the square-based orbs on a range timber. We then mounted our test targets on a pine 2-by-4 board using Newbold's plastic nuts and bolts. Mounting the targets to the board allows them to snap back as reactive targets, which don't have to be reset after each shooting session. However, we had a problem with our mounting system when a .45 ACP round struck the 2-by-4 board and nearly cut one of our bolts in two.

Field Tests Recommends

The soft material in this target is a good option when you have a concern about bullet splatter or ricochet. This target is a good choice for indoor ranges or if you are shooting a discipline where repeated downrange trips are inconvenient. Firearms instructors who have to work with Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and 4-H shooting groups with .22 LR guns should consider purchasing the Newbold targets. Shot with the right ammo, they will deliver a lot of target life, we believe. Also, they allow the shooter to have the target mounted at close range.

The optional Knock-Down Action base is probably your best buy with this target when using large calibers. However, we wouldn't use the nut-and-bolt mounting system except with .22s, which aren't likely to shoot through the bolts. Also, the targets are pricey. When we purchased our targets, the 4-inch version cost $17, the 6-inch circle went for $27, and the 8-inch target cost $42. For hunters, the 4-inch targets are satisfactory. Used properly, we think you'll get your money's worth out of the targets.