

IN-HOME TRIG

“ Upon firing, the Blowback pistol releases a CO2-powered blowback, cycling the slide like any live-fire semi-auto pistol and simulating felt recoil. Simultaneously, a laser mounted just under the bore is activated, to visually indicate the hit location. ”



GER THERAPY

Finding time to maintain shooting fundamentals can be a challenge — but there's a realistic solution.

■ LUKE HARTLE

I was at my desk on a random Tuesday afternoon in mid-January when it hit me: I hadn't been to the range for nearly 3 weeks. Granted, that's not long for some and a very long time for others — and I've certainly had longer stints between pulling some triggers at the range — but it bothered me more than usual this time.

I was in the middle of editing an article about being fully prepared (it's actually printed in this issue beginning on page 36) as a gun enthusiast who carries concealed. Although it's near impossible to discuss the concept of "being prepared" or having a defensive strategy without talking about trigger time, the article focuses just as heavily on the other equally important facets of preparation — physical, mental and legal.

On that particular afternoon, that article got me thinking just how difficult it can be to train properly. Really think about that for a moment. If you're training for a marathon (not that I'd ever recommend that), putting a treadmill in the basement or simply lacing up and hitting the road out front of the house is easily attained. Getting into woodworking? Put a lathe and a table saw in the garage and you can make dust to your heart's content.

See where I'm going with this? Having chosen a lifestyle dedicated to firearms proficiency, it's not always easy to practice — in any facet. Unless your backyard is measured in acres instead of feet, the neighbors can get a little jumpy at the sound of gunfire. And for most of us, the ol' ball and chain would frown at the installation of an indoor range in the basement where the treadmill used to be.

Another editor on the Gun Digest staff and I were participating in some water-cooler-style whining about these and other range withdrawals, and he asked me if I'd spent any time with the Blowback Laser Trainer.

Negative.

The Blowback Solution

Laser-training pistols have evolved dramatically as of recent, and although every product in that category is far from the real thing, you can train and maintain your basic marksmanship principles such as sight alignment and trigger pull quite effectively. And because there's minimal (if any) muzzle report and no projectiles being launched down range, no down range is needed.

Here's the problem: You don't need to be the head cashier at Bass Pro Shops to know that recoil plays a dramatic effect on, well ... everything we train around. Yes, you can argue that lack of recoil is exactly why many train with a .22 LR, but that doesn't solve the range problem. And most laser trainers have no recoil. That's right — most.

To aid in alleviating range withdrawals, I got my hands on the Blowback Laser Trainer system as recommended. I figured it couldn't hurt, and it surely had to be less than trying to convince the Mrs. that a basement range was mandatory.

Here's the skinny:

The Blowback pistol (known formally as the Blowback Laser Trainer) has a similar weight and overall feel to that of a Glock 19, though it's pretty non-denominational with a metal actuating slide and polymer grip. The muzzle brandishes the bright orange designation of a training gun. The

PHOTO: LUKE HARTLE

trigger is interesting, in that it functions much like a two-stage trigger with a very long-take-up and then a clean break. It pulls a bit hard, but it is one of the better trigger's I've tickled on a training pistol.

Here's where things get interesting: The mag drops out and is actually the housing unit for a standard, tubular CO₂ cartridge. It's also home to the battery that powers the laser — but I'll get to that in a minute.

Upon firing, the Blowback pistol releases a CO₂-powered blowback, cycling the slide like any live-fire semi-auto pistol and simulating felt recoil. Simultaneously, a laser mounted just under the bore is activated, to visually indicate the hit location. It's pretty damn cool.

The Doorknob Test

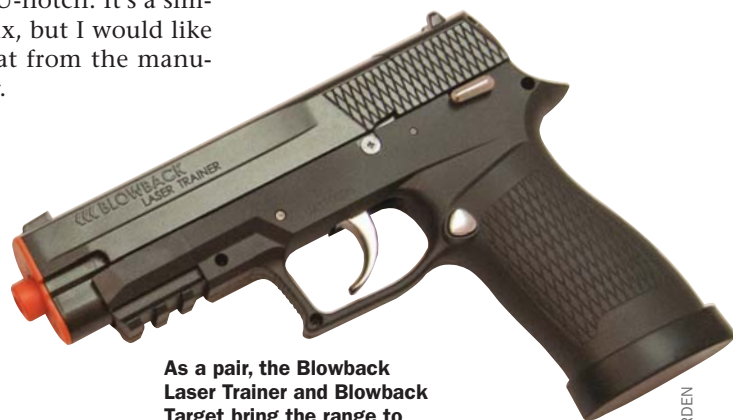
For the next few weeks, I snuck around the house (having a home of-

fice does have its benefits), assaulting every doorknob and receptacle plate from the basement mechanical room to the upper-level master bedroom closet. I even had time to work in a Labrador hunt or two, though he no-doubt thought I had lost my mind. And, an early delivery by the mailman one morning led to a very random conversation that culminated with me learning that he's a Sig connoisseur. Who knew?

Confession: I was quite skeptical about the Blowback system, but then again, I'm skeptical about absolutely everything. But the Blowback surprised me.

Although the recoil isn't overly significant — I'd put it on parallel with a light 9mm target round — it makes a marked difference in how I trained with that laser pistol versus other stagnant laser pistols without any sort of recoil or report. Upon firing, you receive the audible burst of the CO₂ dispersion in addition to the metal racking of the slide functioning during blowback, which brings the entire system that much closer to realism.

The sights are wide and prominent for quick target acquisition, though a little nail polish — my wife's nail polish; I don't own any — would go a long way on both the front post and the rear U-notch. It's a simple home fix, but I would like to see that from the manufacturer.



As a pair, the Blowback Laser Trainer and Blowback Target bring the range to your home when you can't get to the range.

PHOTO: DREW WARDEN



The Blowback Laser Trainer is CO₂-powered by a small canister that seats in the magazine, creating recoil-like blowback to enhance the at-home training experience.

On average, I was getting 47 trigger pulls from a single CO₂ cartridge, which is very reasonable given the amount of inertia it takes to drive the slide. Remember: It's for the weight and feel of a "real" gun overall, including the slide. CO₂ canisters are not hard to come by, and Blowback sells a 20-count box of them on their website for \$20.

The CO₂ canisters seat easily into the magazine through the bottom, and they're installed/removed via a large Allen bolt. The process is a bit slow and I would love to see a Gen2 with a "fast change" option for swapping the CO₂ canisters, but this certainly doesn't detract a bit from the overall effectiveness of the Blowback system.

Blowback also makes a Laser Trainer Target, which features two target faces that light up and report a "ping" sound when hit, and it features a timed and a standard score mode. It's a great addition to the Blowback pistol, and it sees daily action on the shelf across the room from my desk ... namely whenever I have writer's block. Still, I prefer slinking around the house and preying on unsuspecting inanimate objects, but that's just the hunter in me.

Can the Blowback Laser Trainer replace range or simulation time with live ammo? Hell no. And it's not designed for that. However, it does fill in the gaps between trips to the range rather nicely. **GDTM**

PHOTO: LUKE HARTLE

An Established Quality Gun Show Promoter Since 1971

Showmasters Gun Shows

P.O. Box 10277 Blacksburg, VA 24062
P: (540) 951 - 1344 | (540) 951 - 2344
F: (540) 951 - 1424
info@showmastersgunshows.com
www.showmastersgunshows.com

Monroeville, Pennsylvania

PITTSBURGH GUN & KNIFE SHOW

April 7 - 8, 2018
August 25 - 26, 2018
October 20 - 21, 2018

Monroeville Convention Center

HOURS:

SATURDAY 9am-5pm
SUNDAY: 9am-4pm

ADMISSION: \$9.00

Children 12 and under
FREE with paying adult

FREE PARKING

Richmond, Virginia

RICHMOND GUN SHOW

March 24 - 25, 2018 at
Richmond Raceway Complex
600 E. Laburnum Ave. Richmond, VA

May 19 - 20, 2018 at
Old Kmart on Midlothian
6807 Midlothian Turnpike, Richmond, VA

HOURS:

SATURDAY 9am-5pm
SUNDAY: 10am-5pm

ADMISSION: \$10.00



Chantilly, VA

THE NATIONS GUN SHOW

April 20, 21 & 22, 2018
June 8, 9 & 10, 2018
July 27, 28 & 29, 2018

Dulles Expo Center

HOURS:

FRIDAY: 3pm-8pm
SATURDAY 9am-5pm
SUNDAY: 10am-5pm

ADMISSION:

Adults 18+: \$13.00/day
or \$20.00 for 3 Day Pass
Teens 12 - 17: \$7.00
Under 11: FREE

