Essentials of the pistol grip

Right Hand Position

"Top level shooters state that a correct grip hold is half way to achieving successful pistol shooting."

What is meant by the above statement is that you are trying to achieve a steady hold of the pistol with the minimum arc of movement of the sights in the middle of the aiming area, with total consistency and with the minimum use of muscle energy. In order to fulfil all of these requirements, the most important part of the pistol shooting position belongs to the correct placement of the right hand on the correctly built pistol grip.

The position of the right hand on the pistol grip has a major role in the correct holding of the weapon. There are three important points of contact (A, B, C) on the hand and on the grip that must be considered and adjustments made to achieve the optimum contact:
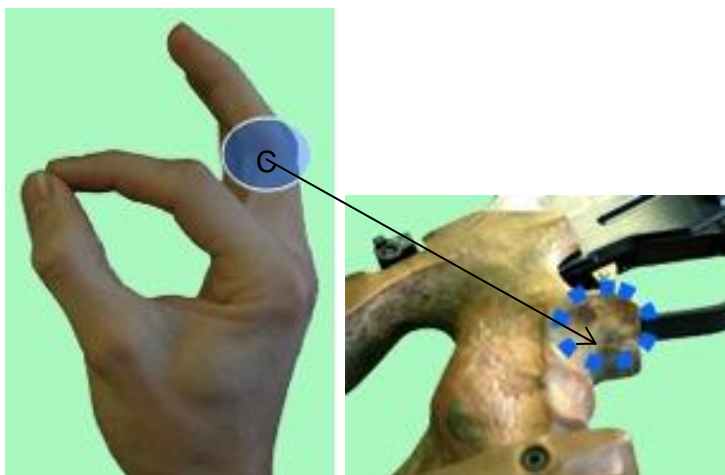
A).   The space or web between the thumb and the index (trigger) finger – which fits into the grip behind the barrel and under the rear sight.
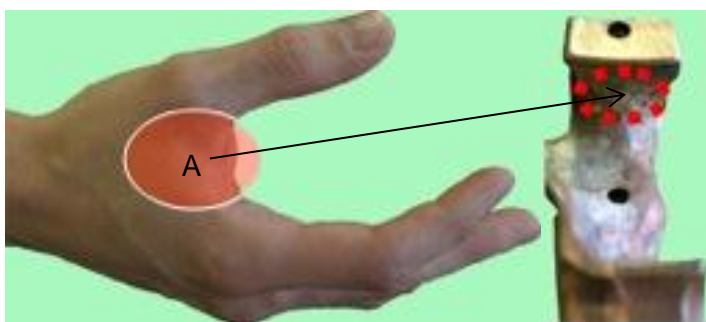
B).   The lower part of the hand, next to the wrist joint – which fits onto the adjustable palm rest section of the grip.
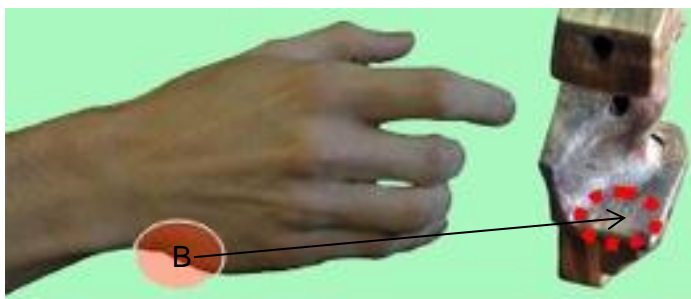
C).   The upper part of the middle finger which is supporting the pistol grip under the rear of the trigger guard.

When these three points of contact are correctly placed on the appointed places on the grip, they will form a triangle.

The best place to support the gun is at its Centre of Gravity which is No.1 (see the left photo – the red dot); But for obvious reasons, this is not possible or practical to achieve. Therefore, we are trying to get as close as it is physically possible to this mark by supporting it at No.2 (the blue dot), as a centre of the A, B, C triangular hold.
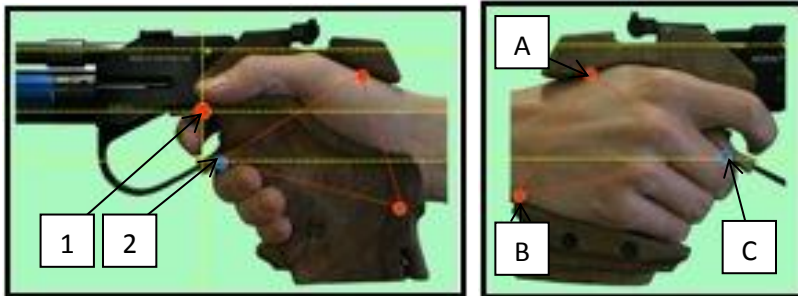
This technique of gripping, results in the use of the laws of the lever. Such an approach will give the possibility to hold the gun steady with the minimum amount of muscle activity, saving energy and also minimizing the arc of movement of the pistol.

When applying pressure with your fingers on the grip, it is extremely important that in doing so, that there are no compound lateral or vector forces being exerted. All pressure forces must be made parallel with barrel and in the 90° axis of the barrel. Any lateral or sideways compound vector forces could cause the pistol to move "Off aim" at the point in time of the shot release.

The little finger, ring finger and middle finger, are carefully wrapped around the grip with a nice, smooth constant amount of tension which is achieved by always ensuring that the middle pad of each of the fingers exert the same pressure on the grip. The middle of the pad is shown by the blue lines marked on each finger. Any other positioning of the fingers will invoke the deployment of the combined vector forces which will result in lateral deviations of the axis of the barrel at the point in time of the release of the shot.

The most important finger of the hand is the trigger finger. This must be free of any contact with the grip. Only when these optimal conditions are achieved, can the correct activity of the trigger finger and correct triggering action be obtained. If this is not the case i.e., if the trigger finger has contact with the grip, every attempt at triggering will result in a variable compound vector force being created, thereby causing the movement of the pistol from the optimal sighting point, at the point in time of the shot release and the required repeatable precision will be lost.

The end section of the thumb and the tips of the little finger, middle finger and ring finger, can have light contact with the grip, but they should not exert any significant pressure as this will adversely affect the shot placement on the target.

Finally, here is the photo showing the optimum points of pressure and transfer points of the forces recommended during the pistol griping technique. Every force and pressure should be in line with the barrel to prevent compound vector forces influencing the natural position of the pistol.