

Target Masters pushes shooting for stress relief

Follow in Dirty Harry's footsteps after a test.

By [Jared Grafman](#) Oct. 01, 2010

"Come on, punk, make my day," Dirty Harry rumbled in "Sudden Impact," looking to fire off a few bullets to vent some stress. Students looking to put a few bullets through a target to relieve their own stress can do just that at Target Masters of Columbia.

Target Masters is a 10-lane, 25-yard indoor shooting range where customers can take their aim at a variety of targets. The targets are hung on a trolley that goes on a cable any distance up to 25 yards away from the shooter.

"We just verify ages," Target Masters salesman Mike O'Dell said. "In order for someone to shoot on the range, our policy is a 15-year-old can come and shoot so long as they are with a parent or guardian, or if you're by yourself you have to be 18."

Target Masters will hold a customer's ID while they are renting at least one of Target Masters' several guns available, O'Dell said. Target Masters employees will also use their discretion when allowing people to shoot on the range, he said.

"Come in sober with a good mindset, you're good," O'Dell says. "Not to sound negative or that sort, but we will use our discretion. If somebody comes in and they look like, I don't know, they're coming out of a bad relationship and they've got a lot weighing on them and they just seem mentally not there, we might not let you on the range. If you come in smelling of alcohol, you're not going to get a gun."

Many people who don't shoot often rent a .22 handgun just to let out their stress, O'Dell said. It costs about \$4 for a box of 50 rounds of ammunition.

O'Dell said Target Masters hasn't seen many college student customers this semester because the range was closed for repair when classes began but that the range draws in customers ranging from teenagers to retired adults.

"We've got the gambit," O'Dell said.

The idea of going to a shooting range to relieve stress had not occurred to junior Daniel Blake, who thinks it would be effective.

"It sounds like a good idea, but I don't have a car so it would be hard for me to get (to Target Masters)," Blake said. "I've not thought about a shooting range as a stress reliever, but I think it'd work."

Other students, such as junior Sebastian Martinez, don't see shooting a gun as a way to relieve stress.

"I probably wouldn't go to a shooting range to relieve stress because I don't view shooting as a stress-relieving activity," Martinez said.

Target Masters has run special discounts for students in the past but will be changing things up and going online when offering discounts and offers in the future.

"Right now, we have a Facebook fan page that, when we get it all together, we're probably going to post coupons in our photo section that people can just print off and bring in," O'Dell said. "What we've done in the past for college students, if you came in and you did the range rental and bought the ammo, we'd wave the charge on the gun rental."

O'Dell said he loves seeing college students who come into Target Masters showing an interest in learning more about guns and gun safety. The only thing he would ask is to come in with an open mind.

"If you're interested, come talk to us," O'Dell said. "We're going to teach you that yes, guns are dangerous. They can take someone's life if used improperly. But if you have an open mind and are willing to learn the proper ways of doing it, it's just a tool like anything else."

Target Masters also offers various types of pepper sprays, stun guns and Tasers for those who want to protect themselves and don't want to buy a firearm.

Although Target Masters doesn't guarantee shooting at the range will relieve a person's stress, it helps a lot of the time.

"Prior to me working here, I was a member here," O'Dell said. "I used to take my lunch breaks here. If I was having a bad day, I would come in here. This would relieve stress, I would go back, and the rest of the day would go good."