



## Spartan Firearms Training Group, LLC

### Tip of the Week—January 5, 2026

#### LEARNING THROUGH NEURAL CHANGE

In “Wet Mind: The New Cognitive Neuroscience,” Stephen M. Kosslyn and Olivier Koenig explain how the brain works, with direct relevance to understanding perception, decision-making, attention, and action under stress—all critical for a responsible armed citizen.

According to the authors, a “wet mind” is what your living brain does. Thoughts, fear, focus, memory — all of it comes from real neurons and real chemistry.

One of their main ideas is that “wet brains” adjust by altering neural pathways—the more a pathway fires, the stronger it becomes. This is the biological basis of learning and memory (skills, habits, pattern recognition).

We discuss this in all of our wear-and-carry courses during the afternoon session. We remind people that what many call muscle memory is actually neural pathway memory. As you train, the brain creates neural pathways for each skill. The more you train that skill, the stronger and faster that neural pathway becomes.

There is one important caveat: you must train the right skill, and you must train it the right way.

- Training the wrong skill well is dangerous.
- Training the right skill poorly is just as bad.
- Whatever you practice gets wired into your brain. Under a deadly-force threat, your mind will fall back on the patterns you built in training.
- People who have been shooting for years without formal training also have hardened habits. Their old neural pathways don’t let go easily. That’s why, even after an instructor

provides clear feedback, many students revert to what they've always done rather than use what they've just been taught (we observe this frequently during our live-fire range days).

- If those patterns are wrong—or sloppily learned—guess what will show up when it matters most?

Self-defense takeaway: Repetition under realistic conditions strengthens the exact neural pathways you rely on in a real encounter — so remember, practice does not make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect.