Basic Aiming Position: Front View – Shoulder and Supporting Pillar

The view from the target to the aiming position is unusual, since this vantage point is avoided for security reasons. Furthermore, the parapet usually blocks the entrance to the area in front of the barrel. But overall, this one is the most telling, since it alone reveals such critical aspects as the bearing of the head or the contact point of the left elbow. Committed trainers should therefore walk in front of their shooters on a regular basis but not without first checking the lock in order to see if it opens properly.

The shooter himself can examine his Front view quite simply in front of a mirror. Dry practice at home offers the perfect opportunity for such a confrontation. On the shooting range, a large mirror should also be available, in front of which the shooter and trainer can discuss their impressions and suggestions for corrections. Points to consider during a self-analysis or an exchange of views with your trainer are shown in the following list. We shall once again use Torsten’s position for orientation which we have already studied from the side.

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**Fig. 1:** The head rests with its own weight on the back of the stock. The cheekpiece is carefully adjusted until the eye glance directly through the sight. The rifle is slightly canted toward the face and the head slightly tilted toward the aperture sight. Stronger canting is problematic since the gun’s response to the shot becomes more difficult to control.

The right arm is relaxed, but the trigger hand has a firm grip on the gun. If the stock is long enough, the right elbow rises to an almost horizontal line but without expending energy. The buttplate is deeply seated against the shoulder. It should be placed as close to the neck (center of the body) as possible.

The right shoulder is largely relaxed. Even the smallest forces affect its steadiness and are discharged when a shot is released.

The left shoulder is lowered, so that the elbow reaches down to the hip. The upper arm is relaxed and lies comfortably alongside the chest.

The lower left arm and the left hand form a plane beneath the stock which should be as vertical as possible.

The upper body is arched backwards in the lumbar region to bring the weight of the rifle to the center of the body.

The lower point of contact on the crest of the hip is selected so that the arm can be fully relaxed. Appropriate material on the sleeve and the outside of the jacket greatly supports the adhesive friction.

The hips are pushed forward to counterbalance the arch of the upper body. At the same time, the pelvis remains aligned with the target, while the tip of the left hip (facing the target) rises and thus counterbalances the spinal position. By elevating the crest of the hip, a better contact point for the elbow is also provided. The extent to which the hip is pushed forward and the extent of its inclination are determined by the size and weight of the body. Smaller statures require stronger bending, while larger and heavier bodies should make due with minor shifts.

The left leg carries 60 - 90% of the body weight. It stands in an almost vertical line so that the static position of the body is largely achieved by its bones. The left leg, along with the hip bone, the upper left arm and the supporting hand, forms a vertical pillar which holds the rifle without expending energy.

The shooting carries a remainder of the entire body and rifle mass. Above all, it braces the supporting pillar toward the back (away from the target).

Both legs have a slight forward inclination, so that the spinal column assumes its normal position over the feet. The legs are also used to counterbalance lateral fluctuations.

The right foot is approximately aligned with the target and is oftenshifted back only several centimeters (towards the back). Frequently, the tip of the foot is turned up somewhat to regulate tension in the right leg. The left foot stands approximately at a right angle and is directly aligned with the target. It is decisive in determining the basic position towards the target and regulating tension in the left leg. The position is carefully established during trial shooting and is corrected time and again throughout the series.

The foot position differs considerably from person to person. Very wide intervals are especially observed among women. Once in a while, considerable twisting is used to stabilize the hip position. Such extremes are justified in individual cases. Nevertheless, the foot position returns to normal when the rest of the aiming position is thoroughly developed.

In the enlargement, without the hand and rifle, the posterior contacts between the body and stock can be seen. The buttplate is the rearmost point of contact, more or less the rotating axis, on which the rifle can be turned when firing. This contact can cause considerable difficulties, especially with the air rifle and standard rifle. Taller shooters, especially those with long necks, have difficulties reaching down to their shoulder at all. By no means should the shoulder be actively raised, since tension sometimes slackens off when fixing which results in sloppy blanks. The only solution here is to lift the head even further forward and to ease this position by elevating the sighting line which in turn gives rise to additional risks with irregular canting. Good shooters try to place the buttplate as close to the neck and thus to the center of the body – as possible. At the same time, the shoulder should only be minimally turned from the target line. To obtain this closeness to the body, the inner side of the stalk is often filed down, so that the wood touching the upper chest would otherwise be in the way. The profile of the buttplate should be adapted to the contour of the shoulder. Two contact points with some space in between would be ideal here. This would keep the gun from resting on the barrel’s axis when a shot is fired. The cheekpiece also controls the rotation of the gun on its longitudinal axis. If the head is only placed alongside the gun, there is nothing to prevent it from slitting out to the side. It would be better to place the cheekbone on the vertex of the cheekpiece to preclude any rotation. The cheek must also be carefully aligned with the opening of the aperture sight. Height and lateral adjustments must be exact to the very millimeter, so the eye can glance directly through the iris aperture when the head is in a relaxed position. Even minor in- trusions into the sight can cause consequences such as neck tension and sighting mistakes.

**Fig. 2:** Petra also prefers a high right elbow with the stock deeply seated in her supporting hand. Since she is small, her head is held unconstrained.

**Fig. 3:** The supporting pill and static base line while aiming in the standing position. You should keep this pillar in mind when you assume your aiming position, and especially when you start to make any changes. Check the trend of this inner “base” in front of a mirror by attempting to bring your limbs into line. When your eyes are closed, you should feel the pillar. It allows you to relax your left leg and your lower arm and hand. As long as you still have strength in your arm, your rifle will carry out lateral movements.

Only shifting your entire weight to your bones will steady the gun. Many of the aiming problems in the standing position result from the incorrect height of the pillar. If your stance is too deep, for example, you will automatically extend your left arm or hand a little, but even the slightest "elevations" are enough to cause you to sway. So get used to correcting your height only by shifting your bones.