EXTERNAL FIRING POSITION: 
UPPER PART OF THE BODY

THE UPPER PART OF THE BODY CONTAINS OUR »POWER UNIT« AND BUILDS THE »BASIC PLATFORM« FOR THE ARMS AND HEAD. FOR THE FIRING POSITION, IT IS IMPORTANT TO FIND THE TORSO'S IDEAL POSITION AND TO KEEP THE SAME ALIGNMENT FROM SHOT TO SHOT.

The spinal column and the chest support the firing position, while the abdominal, back and shoulder muscles make it moveable. The heart and lungs work inside, followed by the stomach and metabolic organs further below. The upper part of the body is thus responsible for our posture, movement and energy.

In the firing position, it forms the central building block which rests on the pelvis and binds the arms with the head. To level the gun on target and control balance, statics and tension at the same time, a number of contortions are demanded of the upper body. These must be repeated with relative precision, although the solid torso doesn’t appear very suitable for fine movements. Guiding the upper part of the body is of special importance, especially in competition, when breathing and heart action are accelerated and the musculature slightly overstrained.

- SHIFTING THE UPPER PART OF THE BODY

To assume the firing position, the upper part of the body performs a vast number of various movements. It leans back (towards the heels) and to the right in order to balance the weight of the gun. The shoulder girdle is turned towards the target (rotation) to offer the butt plate a suitable point of attachment. At the same time, the right shoulder is slightly raised and the left shoulder lowered. The left hip bone is pushed forward (by the position of the pelvis) to create a more favorable base for the elbow. These outward shifts are naturally greater for a light build, since a greater number of corrections are required to compensate for the gun's weight. (Fig.1)

- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FIRING POSITION

The ideal position of the upper body can hardly be described. Instead, it is largely determined through experimentation on the part of the shooters. It is of advantage here to consult an experienced trainer who offers sound advice upon conferring with the athlete. Since the basic position assumed at the start of technical training is usually sustained over a long period of time, teenagers and beginners should be carefully advised in this regard. The following rules and strategies serve as ground rules to establish the position of your torso:

1. When developing the position of your torso, you should begin without a shooting jacket and check your posture in a mirror. You can see the actual conditions better this way and recognize extremes early on.

2. The outward shifts should be kept at a minimum to avoid extreme bending. The lesser the length and weight of the gun, the smaller the torsions. The size of the gun must be carefully selected, especially for adolescents. In all clubs, an adequate number of light 'junior air rifles' should be available!

3. A proper posture of the upper body requires adequate mobility. Special gymnastic and stretching exercises enhance freedom of movement. Regular practice also increases precision control. Excessive weight and restricted mobility hinder the functions of the upper body.

4. The musculature of the torso provides for stability in the upper body and enhances the special condition required to hold out a larger number of firing positions. Regular strengthening of the abdominal and back muscles is therefore one of requirements for constant shooting results in the standing position.

5. Stiff fitting shooting clothes relieve the musculature considerably and stabilize the posture at the same time.

6. A stand, on which to rest the rifle, reduces the movements of the upper part of the body. The firing position can thus be reproduced more easily, and the work of the muscles and ligaments is reduced.

7. Compressed air rifles enable a further reduction of strain placed on the muscles and motor system. (Fig.2)

...To be continued.

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