EXTERNAL SHOOTING POSITION: UPPER PART OF THE BODY II


* TAKING AIM AND SUBSEQUENT ADJUSTMENTS

Taking aim in the standing position begins with mounting the butt plate on the shoulder. It must sit perfectly in the same place. Many elite athletes leave it on their upper arm joint between shots and only move their right arm to load the gun. A butt plate with a non-slip surface and sharp contours are helpful in this regard. By placing the right elbow in position on the hip, the upper body is able to maintain its proper position. The height and side of this attachment must be correct to the very millimeter, so the torso finds its back position and rotation. Through repeated adjustments of the elbow, the fit of the attachment point can be made more exact, if required. It is no coincidence that the "world's best shooters" of 1998 and 1999, namely Sonja Pfeilschifter and Josef Goenzi, refrain from even taking their elbow off their hip between shots in the meantime. Only the right hand reaches forward to load the gun on the stand. However, maintaining this shooting position for more than an hour requires an immense, special condition. At most, average shooters catch a lumbago (a painful inflammatory rheumatism of the tendons and muscles of the lumbar region) with this method.

* INTERNAL SHOOTING POSITION AND PRECISION ADJUSTMENTS

When you feel that your elbow is properly attached, 'check through' the internal shooting position until statics, balance and tension are correct. During this control, your head is still above the sighting aperture, so that your breathing can flow without hindrance. You are not yet pressed for time, since this position can be maintained up to one minute without tiring. The internal shooting position must be satisfactory before you glance through the sight. For the most part, precision adjustments are still required before you can commence with the shot release.

Problems always occur during standing shooting when the muzzle is 'forced' into the center. The upper body with the shooting jacket then works like a spring which allows the rifle to spring back to the proper holding point with the release. A sure sign for proper adjustment is the steady position in the center and a reflex-free reaction of the muzzle during the shot. During subsequent aiming, the sight should return exactly to the middle point.

* THE WAY TO THE CENTER MARK

Target path representations, like the SCATT, allow a comparison of methods used by different shooters in covering the last centimeters to the center. In extensive comparisons with athletes of higher performance classes, we discovered that lowering from above is probably the most favorable method. By lightly exhaling, the chest contracts, and the rifle glides gently into the center. The faster the release can be mastered, the higher the quota of hits. It is worthwhile to train the line of the gun to the middle because the target path analyses show that a constant "lowering corridor" is almost as important for a good score as the ability to hold. This lowering is nothing more than a precision movement of the upper body which is accomplished by the musculature and regulated by the outflow of respiratory air.

To selectively train lowering onto the mark, it is definitely worthwhile to use a computer operated target path system since the learning process is substantially shortened with such a system. Mistakes and wrong methods can thus be avoided early on.

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