THE SHOOTER ARRIVES LATE, WHEN THE COMPETITION IS ABOUT TO START. HE DROWE HIS CAR IN A STATE OF TENSION, DUE TO THE LATENESS OF THE HOUR. HE CARRIED HIS BAGS FULL OF ARMS AND ACCESSORIES AND QUICKLY SET UP HIS EQUIPMENT. HE HAS A QUICK CUP OF TEA, A SODA OR A CUP OF COFFEE. HE TAKES HIS PLACE AT THE FIRING LINE AND STARTS TO COMPETE.

The actions mentioned above summarize everything one should not do, but which our shooters, in every discipline, do all the time. Perhaps this is due to a lack of knowledge, perhaps to an excess of informality in a competitive context.

A shooter who arrives in a state of tension and fatigue, with his mind on other matters, can hardly have a good performance. We constantly bear the same thing: "I was hardly able to get my practice shots in and since there was no time, I had to start the competition right away. The first two series were very bad, later I improved a little and at the end I shot really well."

The answer is really quite simple: The lack of a good warm up implied sacrificing even some competition shots in order to adapt the psycho-physiological systems to the circumstances, with the consequent decrease in performance and total score during the competition. Regardless of one's level of shooting, a good warm up will optimize the desired performance.

THE WARM UP

The warm up prior to a competition consists of a series of physical movements that prepare the body and the mind for a competitive sports performance. The salient points regarding the benefits of a warm up are:

- It prepares the neuromuscular systems for competition.
- It lowers the level of muscular tension, improving relaxation.
- It sensitizes specific sense organs.
- It improves the psychological predisposition for competitive effort.
- It improves the range of action of the articulations.
- It improves the elastic properties of tendons and ligaments.
- It dilates arteries and capillaries, improving blood flow.
- It improves speed of the nervous impulse.

As in the case of the physical preparation we discussed in our previous article, a warm up must involve the same muscle groups. A good warm up must comply with the following general protocol. A light 10-minute jog. This jog must be practiced a fast walk, where the foot clearly marks the contact of heel, sole and tip of the shoe. This allows us to train the muscles of the lower limbs in all their extension and, above all, to avoid “bounding” that would harm the articulations.

The arm movements that accompany the jog prepare the upper limbs and articulations for the following exercises. It is important to note that while jogging, the fingers, hands and articulations of the wrist can be rotated, extended and flexed in order to prepare the parts of the body involved in holding the gun and shooting.

ROTATIONS

After these movements, we do rotations of all the articulations involved in shooting.

- Torso rotation exercises
- Rotation of the hips in both directions
- Rotation of the semi-fixed knees in both directions
- Rotation of the hands in both directions

Exercises that raise and lower the shoulders

Forward and backward rotation of the shoulders

This light jog helps the muscles warm up and the articulations improve their synovial viscosity, adapting their movements to the requirements of the competition.

ROTATIONS

After these movements, we do rotations of all the articulations involved in shooting.

- Torso rotation exercises
- Rotation of the hips in both directions
- Rotation of the semi-fixed knees in both directions
- Rotation of the hands in both directions
- Rotation of the torso in both directions

Exercises that raise and lower the shoulders

Forward and backward rotation of the shoulders

Circular movements in both directions of neck/shoulder

Lateral stretching of neck/shoulder muscles

Rotation exercises for arms, elbows and wrists

Exercises involving tensing and passive stretching of the fingers

After this, one can continue with a very light 3-minute jog in order to get rid of tension and start to concentrate mentally on the competition. Finally, muscle-stretching exercises without any bounding, in combinations with an adequate breathing rhythm will deepen this warm up even further. We will breathe while holding our muscles under normal tension and exhale in order to relax completely during the stretching, letting ourselves relax completely during exhalations for maximum muscle relaxation.

LEG STRETCHING

Exercises for back and leg flexibility

Back of the legs: sit at shoulder width, bend at the knees, over the legs. Same position, but widening the distance between the feet and letting the torses and the arms fall towards the foot.

Back of the leg (saddlebone): sit on the floor, lie on your side or stand on one leg, take your ankle in one hand and softly pull the leg, trying to touch the buttock with it.

EXERCISES FOR SPORT SHOOTING

All stretching exercises indicate the active muscle groups, and they are all specifically designed for all disciplines of sport shooting. These exercises should be performed before each workout and competition.

If we wish to improve our performance, we must leave nothing to chance, including a good warm up.

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PROFILE

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EDUCATION


- 1989 - 1992 Universidad de Piura - Buenos Aires, Argentina. Bachelor of Arts (Psychological Studies Major) studies were completed in December 1989 from the University of Piura in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The University provided Ricardo with a partial sports and academic scholarship.

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