THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESS

THE SHOOTING SPORT PRESENTS SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES, PARTICULARLY FOR BEGINNERS, BECAUSE OUR SPORT IS NOT DIRECTLY RELATED TO OTHER COMMON PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES (RUNNING, JUMPING, TOS-ING, CLIMBING, ETC.). CONTRARY TO THESE ACTIVITIES, WE TRAIN IN ORDER TO LEARN TO REMAIN STILL.

1. SHOOTING POSITION.
   First of all, the shooter must establish contact with the gun in order to become familiar with the grip, learn how to hold it, become accustomed to its dimensions, textures and even its scent. The gun will be his most precious tool as it will open the doors to sports shooting.
   Once he has become familiar with the gun, he can practice his shooting position. He can assume a seated position, with support for either the long or short gun. This is a comfortable, safe and very stable position that will let him become acquainted with the functional systems of the gun at no personal risk.

2. BREATHING PROCESSES.
   The shooter must learn how the gun is kept stable with the help of his breathing. It is very important that the shooter understand the importance of developing a deep breathing, diaphragmatic process that fills the entire lungs on the in-breath. Short breaths that raise the shoulders should be avoided. The deeper and slower the breathing process, the more effective the oxygen supply to the brain.
   A deep and rhythmic breathing process induces calming effects that improve concentration and levels of muscular tension.

3. AIMING PROCESSES
   After taking two or three deep breaths, the shooter should hold his breath without any difficulty for at least 10 seconds. This will allow him to shoot between 8 and 10 seconds after assuming the appropriate position and aiming the sights on the target without reaching the critical moment of the shot breathing.

4. SHOOTING PROCESSES
   When it is time to shoot, the previous three processes (position, breathing, aiming) become a single action, the execution of a shot. In sport shooting one can make small mistakes in other techniques and still score a ten. But shooting is not allowed for any mistakes when releasing a shot. In learning to release a shot it is very important to tense the trigger finger as much as possible, first of all, with a lot of dry firing and with supported triggers so that the shooter can see the need for slow and progressive pressure until the release of the pin. If he makes mistakes, the coach can place his hand over that of the shooter in order to show him how to pull the trigger correctly.

Our brain conforms to external information and accommodates its motor patterns to the best response, so we must be very alert to bodily sensations in each exercise. Consequently, the learning process requires external stimuli that can be analyzed by the nervous system in order to evaluate the type of response required and its correct execution. This response must solve the problem based on simple information provided and on the personal experience of the shooter. Through this process, the brain detects itself from the field of conscious decisions in order to establish automatic motor patterns based on prior training and experience. These “closed space” can be occupied with solving more difficult problems once the technique is solidly fixed on the motor structures.

HOW SHOULD WE LEARN THE SHOOTING TECHNIQUES?

From a technical point of view, the training sciences seek to solve two problems:

1. Building motor models, providing the individual with the necessary stimuli in order to obtain the right response from a scientific point of view.

2. Adjusting these motor models to real-life situations experienced by the shooter.

HYPOTHESIS

Perfecting the precise automatic response system does not reside in the sum of muscle actions (neuromuscular memory, drill), but rather on its potential for reorganization at every instant of execution and during successive executions. This is how one can achieve the right response (the shot) at the ideal moment.

ACQUIRING INFORMATION

The permanent adjustment of motor actions requires a certain plasticity of the motor repertoire, so that one can place a greater emphasis on sensory control during the adjustment of the learning process.

INTELLIGENT TRAINING – Phases

Global, Exploratory Phase: the shooter comes into contact with the problem. It can take hours, minutes or fractions of a second.

- Dissociation Phase: in the beginning the movement is diffuse, imprecise and clumsy. Motor actions are imprecise and imply numerous unnecessary muscle contractions, including some that impede good execution.
   - During this phase, the process of control and neuromuscular inhibition selects the most efficient combinations. In this phase the motor habits will become progressively fixed.
   - Stabilisation Phase: the moment when the motor habit becomes automatic. This automatic response will be applied unconsciously in later activities and in new learning processes.

How do we apply these phases when learning to shoot? It’s very simple, but always respecting safety measures. The shooter should be allowed to explore the gun, its weight, texture, function, scent, etc. He must learn to stop thinking of the gun as a foreign object. He must be taught basic technical and aiming concepts. The person will not be able to assimilate too much information, so keep it simple, precise, and safe.

- Shooting practice. This stage should begin with an explanation of the shooting technique.

In this phase, the basic technique is established firmly in the brain. It is only at this point that we can begin to develop more complex techniques, shooting in other positions, without any support. Only after becoming an effective and highly confident shooter can one move on to more complex techniques.

The search for perfection is often not synonymous with difficulty. Thus, the simplicity of perfection is clearly evident.

It is important to remember that any first experience will forever brand an emotional moment. So, anyone who starts shooting, regardless of his age, must be firmly trained in basic shooting techniques. A shooter who has only trained for shooting in one particular discipline, ignorant of the basic shooting techniques, will have mastered the technical model of execution but will find it very difficult to step outside of that model.

It is very important, as a beginner, to come into contact with instructors whose serious and knowledge is firmly established, and there are many out there. Intelligent training will always be synonymous with simplicity, precision, and expert performance even under the toughest conditions.

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