

THIS SERIES OF INSTRUCTIONAL ARTICLES FOR MID-CLASS AND CLUB SHOOTERS IDENTIFIES THE MOST MISSED TARGETS, WHY AND HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SCORES.

SHOOTING THE MOST MISSED TARGETS GUN DOWN

**INSTRUCTION FROM
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Why shoot gun down and introduce a variable when in previous articles we have discussed cutting out variables in our technique! There are some disadvantages to shooting gun down, but the advantages far out weigh them.

So now we're going to add another club to our bag – as I

mentioned in a previous article, you need the whole set of clubs to play a round of golf and the same applies with shooting. Gun down shooting is another club we need to use correctly – it is not the only one and should not need to be used all the time because there are numerous targets that are better shot gun up.

Shooting gun down gives a much better view of the target. It also gives the shooter (particularly those with wrong eye dominance problems) the opportunity to turn their head to see the target better – particularly when it's coming in from the blind side. For all shooters, there is less opportunity to 'look' at the gun because the



WRONG. IN THIS SEQUENCE THE SHOOTER HAS GONE FROM GUN DOWN TO GUN UP AND THEN, IN A COMPLETELY SEPARATE MOVEMENT, HAS STARTED THE SWING AND IS APPLYING LEAD (SEE ARROW SEQUENCE).



CORRECT. FROM GUN DOWN, THE TARGET IS ACQUIRED AND LEAD APPLIED IN ONE CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT ACROSS THE BODY UNTIL THE GUN HITS THE SHOULDER AND FACE AT WHICH INSTANT THE TRIGGER IS PULLED (SEE ARROW SEQUENCE).

rib/barrels are away from the eye-line. The muzzles are still held just under the line of flight at the muzzle pick-up point, but the eyes will be looking for the target 'across' the end of the muzzles instead of 'along' the rib. The muzzle pick-up point remains the same as discussed in my previous articles, but as the gun is away from the face, the shooter has a far better view of the visual pick-up point.

It is also easier to get the gun moving when it is out of the shoulder, because we can use our arms and body to achieve movement, overcoming the dead gun effect. The movement is also efficient, which creates time to make the shot. For the gun mount to be efficient, it must be one smooth movement with the gun coming to the shoulder and face only when pulling the trigger. In actual fact, the gun coming to the shoulder should assist with a nice smooth sub conscious trigger pull, not a deliberate pull.

I have a lot of students coming to my shooting school, who when asked if they shoot gun up or down reply "gun down". But when I watch them shoot, the gun is mounted as soon as they call 'pull' and then they proceed to shoot their preferred method of achieving lead. This is, in effect,

two separate movements. First the mount – that is usually rushed and incorrect – and then the application of lead.

The reason most shooters shoot in this fashion is because they have watched someone shooting gun down and seen how much time they have to make the

shot. What they fail to notice is that the gun mount was one smooth movement with the gun only in the shoulder and face at the time of pulling the trigger.

Initially, I teach these students to shoot gun up to cut out the variable of the rushed gun mount. Then I start to teach them how to mount the gun smoothly and correctly – most students miss targets specifically due to the gun not being mounted correctly. They mount too soon and have to look at the gun to check the eye-rib

alignment before getting on with taking the shot. The gun mount must be one movement that achieves speed, direction and lead on the target all before the stock makes contact with the shoulder and face.

Gun mount must be learned to be come instinctive and automatic – just as we need to be instinctive with our lead pictures (not measured).

Once this has been learned and is automatic, we now have the

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option of taking the gun out of the shoulder in between shots (if required) and moving our position to address the second target – this is an option not available to the gun up shooter. For example – a high driven target followed on report by a fast left to right crosser. Once the driven target has been shot, the gun can be taken out of the shoulder and lowered to the muzzle pick-up point just below the line of flight of the crosser. As the body makes a quarter turn to the break point of the second target, the eyes go to the visual pick-up point, the target is acquired with the muzzles, the gun comes into the shoulder and face as the lead picture is right and the trigger is pulled. Try doing all that with the gun pre-mounted in the shoulder!

Once we have perfected our gun mount and are confident that it is now instinctive and that there is no need to check eye-rib alignment, the transition for those who want to go game or wing shooting becomes much easier. It is the most natural way to shoot – after all, we don't walk around the hunting field or sit in the duck blind all day with the gun mounted in our shoulder.

Let's re-cap on the disadvantages and advantages of shooting gun down:

DISADVANTAGES

- **Does not work well with fast, short window targets and quartering targets.**
- **Good gun fit is very important.**

ADVANTAGES

- **More movement is achieved.**
- **Stops aiming of the gun and gun watching (looking down the rib).**
- **Stops body weight transfer that causes rolling of shoulders, taking the gun off line.**
- **Gives a combination of arm movement and body rotation to give maximum movement.**
- **Makes starting the gun movement easier, overcoming the dead-gun effect.**
- **Good on crossing and high targets.**

Having established the advantages of gun down shooting, in the next issue we will look at how to achieve a perfect gun mount detailing technique and exercises you can do at home to achieve perfection.

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