

The Intricacies of Precision Shooting



US Army Marksmanship Unit's Daryl Szarenski demonstrates a strong hold and a proper grip.

Precision shooting is a complex process. Athletes can spend a lifetime learning to perfect any one aspect that creates accurate precision shooting. One of the most important aspects of shooting a precision stage of fire in Air Pistol, Free Pistol, or 25 meter Pistol is the shooting position. There are many different types of shooting positions; however, some of the areas you should pay close attention to are stability, pistol position, non-firing arm location, head alignment, proper grip, and accurate sighting.

Though simple, the main requirement of the shooting position is to be immobile and stable, yet comfortable. In order to accomplish this, a shooter must have his/her feet less than or shoulder width apart at a maximum. Make sure that the body weight is distributed evenly between both legs. One way to do so is by engaging the muscles of the feet and legs. Lean forward until the toes begin to feel weight. This will minimize body sway while the shot process is being applied. Holding your weight forward on the balls of your feet will fatigue your muscles. It also becomes more challenging to relocate the same position; however, over a period of time your muscles will strengthen and the position will become second nature. Many who use this method are very successful. Make sure to allow enough time

for your muscles to adjust when experimenting with this position.

Another method involves placing your body weight in the center of your feet and slightly toward the heels. The position take advantage of your skeletal alignment, thus requires less energy. Make sure your knees are locked, but not stiff. Lean your upper body slightly away from the target. Your hips should be level and leaning slightly toward the target. The center of gravity is closer to the rear foot. This stance is especially useful to maintain stability for extended periods of time in Air Pistol, where competitions last one hundred and five minutes for men and seventy-five minutes for women. This is the most efficient position because there is minimal strain in obtaining and maintaining the position.

The next facet is the shooting arm, which should be stretched out. When the arm is completely stretched out, the distance between the eye and the front sight will remain consistent. Make sure the bend in the arm is facing up, as that will allow for the most strength in your lift and hold. The shoulder, arm, and elbow will become a compact unit allowing for better control of pistol movement and efficient recoil absorption.

Moving across the body, make sure to control your non-firing arm. Place your non-firing hand in the pocket, allowing the arm to hang comfortably along the body. A wise tip is to ensure that the pocket is empty to avoid distractions when shooting. Hook your thumb in your pocket and allow your hand to rest along the thigh or relax with fingers in a natural curl. A second option is to wrap your non-firing arm around the front and hold your belt. Both methods create a compact unit. A loose arm could move and transfer movement to the gun.

Next, turn your head to the right (if you are right-handed) to allow your eyes to work naturally. The vestibule mechanism will maintain equilibrium. The neck muscles will do their job and holding the head position without fatigue, which in turn allows the eyes to work effortlessly.

In order to get a grip on the pistol, use your non-firing hand to help align the pistol. Open your right hand to form a "U" between the thumb and index finger. Place the pistol into the "U" until the pistol contacts the crevasse of your hand. Then, wrap the palm around the grip until the base of the hand is on the palm rest of the pistol. Next, enfold the middle, ring, and little fingers (as a unit) around the front of the grip. Your

“ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF SHOOTING A PRECISION STAGE OF FIRE IN AIR PISTOL, FREE PISTOL, OR 25 METER PISTOL IS THE SHOOTING POSITION.”

PISTOL



A view from above as SFC Daryl Szarenski shows a strong, straight shooting arm.

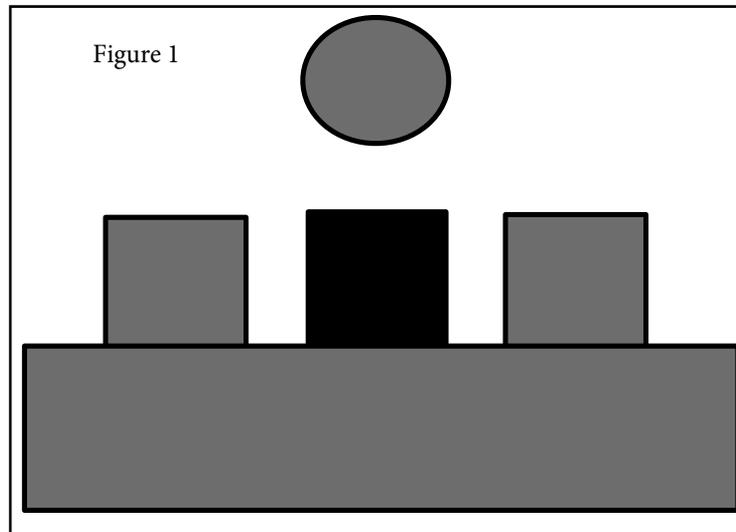
middle finger should rest under the trigger mechanism. Your trigger finger, or index finger, should be free of any contact with the grip. The correct grip will allow for natural sight alignment.

To properly sight in the pistol, make sure the front sight is located in the middle of the rear sight notch. Also ensure that the tip of the front sight blade is level with the rear sight. The space on either side of the front sight should be equal distance.

Finally, the area of hold varies from shooter to shooter and

is optional. The following methods are suggested areas of hold: center, 6 o'clock, line of white, and sub 6 o'clock. Once the holding area is identified, make sure to use it on a consistent basis. The correct holding area is the one that gives you the best results for your effort. Figure-1 is an illustration of a sub 6 o'clock area of hold. I wish you the best of luck as you experiment and discover your perfect pistol position for perfect 10's.

▪ Ray Arredondo



Vogel USA Congratulates

Ozark High School (Sporter) Siegel High School (Precision)

For winning the National JROTC Championships in both team and individual categories

Their pellet of choice: Vogel USA