

A "Ticket to Train"

By Major David Johnson, National Rifle Coach



The purpose of this article is to help maximize what is perhaps our most precious resource: time. I will give you a way to efficiently plan your own time on the range in training, but even more importantly, to take advantage of (and honor!) the time your coaches and club leaders have given to you and your team for training.

Creating a calendar-based training schedule is the first step in building a training plan that leads to skill improvement. The first step is also the easiest...the harder challenge is integrating your goals into the plan so that your daily work leads to progress on your goals.

Use the following "Ticket to Train" approach to create goal and skill based training on a daily basis.

1. Set and write down your goals (see the Resources/Downloads section of USA Shooting's website, <http://www.usashooting.org/downloads.php>, under Coaching to find a previous article written by Johnson on "Setting and Sorting Goals"). List your outcome and their associated performance goals that lead to the outcome goal achievement. Prioritize the goals that you want to achieve in the next year or training period.

2. Download and/or print the "Ticket to Train" Excel spreadsheet (see the Resources/Downloads section of USA Shooting's website, <http://www.usashooting.org/downloads.php>, under Coaching to print your spreadsheet).

3. Start at the top, fill in the date and then fill in Part I: "Performance Goals I am going to work on today."

a. Example--Outcome Goal: Shoot above 380/400 standing by December 2009 Winter Airgun Championship. Performance Goal related to this Long-Term outcome goal: Learn exactly where to place support elbow on hip so that I can have my best skeletal based position and know how to find it every time.

4. From this example, the "Ticket to Train" may have in block one, "Performance goals I am working on today":

"Learn exactly where I should place my support elbow in standing to give me my best support."

5. In the next section of the "Ticket to Train," put after "I Will": "do a holding exercise without my jacket for my first 20 minutes on the range today to help me learn where my support elbow should be for my steadiest position."

Do this with your most important performance goals and you will generate a list of things to do in that day's training.

At the end of your training session, take five minutes and fill in the last part of the ticket. Did you work on the things you set out to do that day? What is left to carry to the next session? File it in your journal and read it before filling out the next day's ticket to train.

Trainers/Coaches/Club Leaders/Parents:

Help your athlete fill in the ticket—make it a requirement to get on the firing line each session. Help them manage their time so that they learn how many goals and tasks they can effectively work on in a typical training session.

Athletes: This exercise only takes about five minutes before you start and five minutes at the end of the session. The benefit is attained instantly through more focused and productive training—which yields skill improvement: shooting better!

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