

English to Olympic

At my shooting school there seems to be a lot of new interest in Olympic Skeet. The 2012 Olympics have certainly boosted popularity, but what we need is even more Skeet shooters to try it.

If you shoot English Skeet and are thinking about making the switch, ease yourself into it. Don't just jump from English to Olympic - a lot of people do this and after one round find it a big shock and never shoot it again!

For someone to go from shooting gun up and aiming for an instant, relatively slow target that can be shot anywhere before the distance peg, to then shoot gun down almost in your pocket, at a much faster target, maybe with a delay and to be shot within bounds. No wonder shooters only try it once.

If you have never tried it, or have done but it was too much, try the method I use at

Senior CPSA coach Roger Hill suggests nine easy steps to make the switch.

my shooting school - I am sure you will be very surprised at how easy it is to make the transition from one to the other.

Get use to the speed

1 The first thing to get use to is the extra speed of the target, so shoot the OSK speed targets gun up. This will enable you to adjust your visual and muzzle pick-up point to the faster target. Your timing will be all over the place to start, as the faster speed will really throw you.



One smooth movement

2 Once you are happy with the speed then start to shoot with the gun just out of the shoulder - not completely in the OSK position - we can gradually build up to this. You must first get used to the gun simply being out of the shoulder. This will be the hardest part, as to get it right and to gain all the advantages of shooting gun down, it must be one smooth movement - the gun only coming to the shoulder and face to pull the trigger. Not two movements - first the rushed gun mount followed by the rushed catching-up of the target (there is no time for this). You may well have to have some lessons with a senior coach to achieve this, it can take up to a year to perfect.

Move on sight

3 So now you have had just a little taste of what OSK is all about and you can cope with the speed and gun out of the shoulder, what now?

When I start a client on the OSK sequence I use all instant targets at English speed, then all they have to worry about is learning the new sequence. I still use instant targets at this stage as this teaches the shooter to move only when they see the target, so when we introduce the delay it will not be a problem as they have been trained to move on sight. It seems to me that a lot of OSK shooters are caught out by the instant target and this will go some way to overcome this. I maintain you can always speed up but it is hard to slow down.

Shoot singles in the same place

4 Keep it simple, learn to break the singles in the same place they will be when part of a pair. By doing this you will

be training your eyes to automatically look in the right place to pick up the second target.

Shoot first targets from every station

5 When you start to practice at the correct speed and with the delay, first learn by only shooting the first target on every station. This will cement the visual, muzzle pick-up and break zones without having to worry about the second target.

Introduce second targets

6 Next, do the same with the second target of the pairs learning where to pick them up, again teaching your eyes to look automatically in the right place.

Shoot a round

7 Once you are confident with all your visual, pick-up and break points for both first and second targets, then (and only then) start to shoot OSK in the correct sequence at the correct speed with the delay. You can now enjoy the round as you have done all the homework and the whole experience will not be such a cultural shock.

Fine-tune

8 When you have got to this stage and you feel you can do it, now is the time for you and your coach to start fine-tuning your performance. The technique and way you have to shoot OSK is not set in stone. There are certain parameters that the targets have to be shot within, but how we achieve this is down to your individual method of

shooting. This is what a good coach will fine tune and get the best out of you, every shooter has his/her happy zone and what works best for them. A good coach will see these strengths and will capitalise on them.

Make it work for you

9 And one final tip... too many shooters try to shoot the same way as top performers and emulate the way they do it. By all means look at what top performers do - it must work for them, but it might not work for you. Take the bits from top performers that work for you, develop your own method and don't be afraid to try other things. Use all your strengths, be comfortable with what you do and how you do it, be natural.

Hopefully by trying OSK this way you will not be put off by what may seem too many to be an impossible discipline to shoot and enjoy. So ease into it a bit at a time you may be pleasantly surprised and there maybe a lot of you out there that can actually do it. This can only be good for our GB teams as the more people shooting a discipline the more depth and strength it give our teams.

It's like learning to drive, you would not have your first go in F1 racing car, you build up to it. And OSK is the F1 of Skeet shooting.

Roger Hill runs Pro Coach Shooting School in Essex and is a senior CPSA coach and course tutor and a Fellow of the Institute of Clay Shooting Instructors. You can contact him on 07836 504726, or roger@procoachshootingsschool.com

