



# STRAIGHT AND STEADY

FOLLOW ROGER HILL'S  
ADVICE, AND YOU'LL WIN THE  
RACE WITH DEAD-STRAIGHT  
GOING AWAY TARGETS

**T**his month we're looking at the dead-straight going away target, with no movement left or right. You may think that sounds pretty easy. But this target is quite often missed: just ask any trap shooter.

The problem is that it is very easy to be complacent with the going away target, and so not give it enough respect. With a target like this, it is very hard to get and keep the right amount of movement on the gun. Does it need lead? Yes it does: even though it may not seem that you are giving a straight target lead, as you cannot see any forward allowance. If a clay pigeon was capable of true level flight you could shoot at it with no lead, but as it has no wings and cannot sustain level flight it actually flies in a curve. It rises as it leaves the trap, due to a faster spin and velocity. This gives it more lift, just like the air flowing over an aircraft wing, which is then reduced as the clay loses velocity and spins slower. All clays do this to a certain degree: very fast targets, like those in olympic trap and skeet, tend to have less curve, especially when they are in range, but watch one in slow motion and it is there. So with insufficient lead you miss behind, which is in fact underneath the target; too much lead and you miss in front (i.e. over the top). So to give this target lead, you need to shoot underneath it. The

shot string catches up the target and overtakes it from underneath; both the target and the shot travel in a parabolic curve, but as the shot travels at a much higher speed its curve is a lot shallower. Therefore it overtakes the clay and arrives in front of it.

Now let's look at what causes misses, either in front or behind. Going away targets are mostly missed in front/over the top. There are several reasons for this: one is due to the misconception that this target needs the lead added in front of it.





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By Roger Hill



STAND SQUARE ONTO THE TARGET: THERE IS NO SIDWAYS MOVEMENT WITH GOING AWAY TARGETS, SO YOU NEED TO KEEP THE GUN STRAIGHT IN FRONT

### So, to re-cap:

- Read the target to understand what it is doing.
- Be balanced at the point of break.
- Know your visual and muzzle pick-up point.
- Shoot gun-up, and cut out the variable of the gun mount.
- Stand a little squarer to the target.
- Keep your arms up a little higher than with your normal sporting stance, to give more control over the upward movement of the gun.
- See it and shoot its legs off.
- Be instinctive: don't hesitate or stop to make sure.
- Shoot safe, shoot straight.

as it is rising, creating a tendency for the novice shooter to lead off the top of the target. Another mistake involves starting with the gun too low under the flight line, which encourages a very rapid upward movement to catch the target up. You cannot control the movement as you reach the target, which again causes a miss in front/over the top. Remember, it is very easy to speed a gun up, but difficult to slow it down.

Missing behind, on the other hand, is usually caused by the shooter stopping the gun as soon as he/she is on the target. The average shot thinks he/she has done enough at this point and pulls the trigger, while more experienced shooters realise the gun is travelling too fast and will go past the target before shooting. A further error is shooting at the clay with a stationary gun, as though it is a paper target. This is very easily done with a target with no sideways movement, and also causes a miss behind.

To cut out these faults, you must establish your break zone, visual, and muzzle pick-up points. However, this is one of the few targets in which the visual and muzzle pick-up points are at about the same place. Once you have established where you want to break the target mount into that area (it should be at a point where the target is still rising), and wind back to your muzzle pick-up point. Be very careful that this point is not too low, or else the gun will travel upwards too fast to catch up the target; conversely, if the muzzle is too high you won't see the target until it is too far out, if at all, as it will be slowing down and dropping. Do your homework before you get into the stand; read the target to understand what it is doing. If you shoot with both eyes open, your visual pick-up point will be different from that of your muzzle, as you will be able to see through the gun and watch the target rising from underneath the barrels. If you need to refresh your memory, go over last

month's article 'How to Read a Target' (*Clay Shooting* October 2007, p.58-59).

You now need a way to keep this small amount of movement going, to break the target with control. You should shoot gun-up, even if you are normally a gun-down shooter. The gun mount can quite often be the cause of a miss in front/over the top, especially if you rush it when faced with a very fast going away target. Cut out as many variables as possible: with the gun pre-mounted on this type of target, it is a good idea to adopt more of a trap shooting stance and hold. Stand a little squarer onto the target: there is no sideways movement, so you need to keep the gun straight in front. Hold your arms a little higher than you would with your normal sporting stance, with your elbows raised a little. The reason trap shooters adopt this hold on the gun is that slightly raised arms act as a damper and restrict the upward movement of the gun, giving the shooter more control. After all, the total movement on a going away target is probably between 6-10" of upward movement.

Just before you call pull, soft-focus as far away as you can. The target will then appear between you and your soft-focus point (you will always see a target quicker the further you look away, as human vision focuses in quicker than out). All shotguns, if correctly fitted, will shoot above the point of aim, so make sure you always stay under the target – do not blot it out, or you will miss in front/over the top. Imagine the target has a short pair of legs, like a duck landing on a pond, and shoot its legs off.

One final tip: as soon you see a going away target clearly and in focus the gun must be pointing at it, so pull the trigger without stopping to make sure. In the words of gunmaker and game shooting author Robert Churchill, 'when you see it, shoot it' – Churchill was referring to walked-up grouse, but the same rule applies here.

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