

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

WHY DID I MISS?

THE MOST
MISSED TARGETS

HOW TO SELF-ANALYSE

**INSTRUCTION FROM
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Static target shooting (rifle and pistol) affords the opportunity for the competitor to see the result of the shot, analyse what went wrong and correct any fault. With a shotgun, when you miss a clay target you can not see the tell tale signs of where the shot went – unless you have a coach at your shoulder to see the shot string or

suggest a reason for the miss.

Personal self analysis of a missed target is difficult, but you must learn how to achieve it or you will never improve. There will be those that think that tracer shells could be an ideal aid to assisting self-analysis. In my experience, use of such shells encourages head lifting – to see where the shot went

– causing other problems. What is really needed is a ‘system’ to work out for yourself what caused the miss, just like we have a ‘system’ for every other aspect of our shooting – pick-up point, break point, lead, gun mount and taking the shot.

The ‘system’ I use, as do many other coaches is based on the



saying “*Most Targets are missed because the beginning is wrong*”. The system is simple and is based on the three Rs.

- 1st R – The miss is a RESULT
- 2nd R – Establish the REASON for the miss
- 3rd R – Apply a REMEDY

Most top shooters, when they miss a target, immediately analyse and reassess lead (too much, too little) or whether they were over or under the target – and then make a correction. For top shots this is sufficient to get back on track but the majority of mid-class shooters need to start their self-analysis at the beginning.

So where does the shot start? At the visual pick-up point? At the muzzle pick-up point? No. The shot starts at your feet! Lets imagine that you have just missed a right to left crosser (1st R established – the RESULT was a miss). Now you have to find the second and third Rs (Reason and Remedy). There are many causes for a miss – and remember that it could be the result of more than one fault, so only change one thing at a time as you go through the sequence of analysis.

Start at the feet. Are you standing correctly and balanced at the break point? (Could cause a miss behind due to running out of swing or a miss underneath due to rolling of shoulders off the line.) If your stance needed correction, do so and take another shot – if you break the target, job done. If you miss again, next thing to analyse is gun mount. Was your eye-rib alignment correct? Did you check it at the break point before winding back? Were you seeing too much rib (this would cause a miss over the top). Change your mount to the correct eye-rib alignment, shoot another target – if it breaks, job done.

So now you can see where we are going with this ‘system’. It finds the cause of missing a target by checking and elimination. If you are still missing the same target, go through the rest of the sequence – is your visual pick-up point correct (did the target beat you – if so, adjust). Was your muzzle pick-up point OK (too far out from the pick-up point. Started too soon or were you too close to the pick-up point allowing the target to beat you?). Adjust until correct. Next, check your break point – did you try and break the target in the right place for your style (happy zone). If not, change – but remember, changing the break point will also involve changing your stance.

If you are still missing the target, then look at the method you used to achieve lead. Try a different method – it might work better on a given target. Remember that the ‘fall back’ method for achieving lead should always be pulled away, as this gives you the target speed and direction – all you have to do is adjust the lead picture until you break the target.

So, to re-cap. When you miss, start from the beginning not the target – from your feet, up through your body out along the gun via your eye-rib alignment, to the visual pick-up point and onto the muzzle pick up point and then onto the target. As soon as you find something wrong change it – but only change one thing at a time until you find the Remedy (3rd R).

Never be afraid to change something. It is better to miss a target in ten different places than ten times in the same place – at least you are trying and all the time that you are trying something different, you are learning. Providing you go through this sequence step by step, nine times out of ten you will find the cause.

If you just can’t sort it out by

yourself, try not to ask other shooters where you missed. To accurately evaluate your shot, they must be in the correct position, close to you, looking over your shoulder at where the gun is in relation to the target when *you* pull the trigger – not beside you or maybe two or three yards behind you. What other shooters (not in the correct position) see is a paradox, not what really happened. Fellow shooters tend to look at your targets, not what you are physically doing. They will only look at your set up when you have missed – and then see that the gun is behind the target because you have completed the shot and already stopped the gun. That’s why 99 percent of shooters tell friends “you missed that behind”.

It takes many years to become a professional shotgun coach and to see the faults that occur in the three to five seconds it takes to execute a shot. So, if you really don’t have a clue as to what is causing misses (particularly on specific speciality targets such as rabbits, battues and chandelles) take time out to see a professional coach. They will correct the fault and teach you how to self-analyse.

Ten faults that can be found by self-analysing.

STANCE

1. **Miss behind** – stance turned too much toward the trap. Run out of swing.
2. **Miss underneath** – As above resulting in rolled shoulders.

GUN MOUNT (eye-rib alignment)

3. **Miss over the top** – Eye too high over the rib
4. **Changing eye dominance** – Due to eye being too low on rib or behind action. Cannot see the target with master eye, causing the other to become the master eye. Causes gun to

be either too far in front of target or behind.

5. **Stopping the gun** – Looking at the gun to check eye-rib alignment.
6. **Miss over the top** – Eye too low, lifting head to see the target resulting in gun going up.

VISUAL AND MUZZLE

PICK-UP POINTS

7. **Miss in front** – Target beats you making you move the gun too fast to catch target. Overtakes target out of control.
8. **Miss in front** – Start too far out and then apply lead.
9. **Miss over the top** – Gun too low under flight line. Rapid upward movement to get onto the target line. Gun goes over target (can also cause next fault).
10. **Miss underneath** – Caused by over compensating when you realise the gun is too high above the target.

Hopefully this series of articles in previous issues has sorted out your most missed targets and that this last article in the series gives you a basis to sorting out future misses. If you have any coaching questions that I have not covered in this series of articles, please email me at roger@procoachshootingschool.com Shoot Safe, Shoot Straight. ■