

TRIGGER OVER SIGHTS

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Whilst observing a WA1500 match being shot, they were at the 10yard series. An experienced shooter was on the line, targets faced, he drew out the pistol, sighted the pistol and proceeded to fire 12 rounds without hitting one 10 and only a hand full of 9's. This amazed me as this guy was very experienced, had been in the State Team, so, knows how to shoot (I thought). So my brain did somersaults figuring out what went wrong and how would a "coach" approach this should it come up at a coaching session? It occurred to me that no amount of sight alignment would have helped this guy out. He is standing directly in front of the targets, so even if sights were slightly misaligned, he should have at least go all in the 9 ring?

It dawned on me the wider than normal shots were a result of very poor trigger control. Pretty simple analysis don't you think so?

With this in mind I thought back many years ago how coaches would emphasise the sole importance of sight alignment, sight focus, total thoughts on sights blah blah, above most other aspects of shooting (my opinion here).

Well, if we back step to the WA1500 shooter and gave this person a goal, would the result be different? I guess we could say hindsight is a wonderful thing. But if the shooter went to the line with the thought that position is good, I'm central to the target, pistol is gripped with two hands so stability is optimised. The only variant is trigger press, which may cause sight misalignment?

Emphasis at this stage would be the acceptance on area of hold (wobble). The shooter should endeavour to operate the trigger with a smooth action, so not to disturb the sight alignment any more than the normal wobble area, which all shooters have.

Explaining that whatever your wobble area is, it cannot suddenly change to being held very "still". But can be controlled better with correct trigger control or action. So acceptance of "YOUR" area of hold (wobble) is vital for a smooth shot!

How does this work???

The eyes see the sights moving around and it is magnified by the black area of the target. The mind sees an opportunity to getting a shot away as it "appears" that the wobble has decreased, so let's fire the shot quickly! What happens here is that the brain sends information down to the trigger finger to press NOW and a reflex action causes the trigger finger to react in a manner which usually causes the sights to move out of alignment even more, due to the sudden trigger movement. The result is a shot further out of the normal "wobble" area. This can be a nine to an experienced shooter, or a shot in the white for less experienced.

Even though the apparent movement of the sights appear to be great, or larger than normal perhaps, it is still within the 8 ring generally based on studies done through the use of SCATT

machines tracing hold on totally inexperienced people. The problem lies in the execution of the shot.

The shooters will need to accept "whatever" their hold is, but whilst endeavouring to keep sights relatively aligned, concentrate on a smooth, rearward trigger press incorporating follow through.

IF THE TRIGGER IS NOT PRESSED STRAIGHT BACK, THE BULLET WILL NOT GO STRAIGHT AHEAD!

Proverb taken from a fellow shooter/coach

Begin with a session on the line, starting out with a blank card. Shooters need to accept the wobble and endeavour to keep focus on sight "clarity and alignment" (as best they can) but concentrate on a continuous, rearward press, smoothly into follow through. Quite a few shots need to be fired to gain this acceptance of "wobble" area.

Turn the targets around and simulate the blank target by holding (aiming) under the black as previously discussed on this site, with focus on sight clarity and alignment with concentration on trigger, regardless where the sights may appear on the target.

Coaches should move up and down the line to watch the pistol's recoil, trigger action and follow through.

Questions you may ask yourself in analysing the shots:-

Is the recoil in the same area after each shot?

Is trigger finger continuing to press the trigger after shot release or is it taken off the trigger immediately after shot? (No trigger Follow Through).

Are they looking at the sights after the shot release or the target?

Are they taking up first stage of trigger before entering target?

Have they "settled" into their area of aim as they endeavour to continue trigger pressure until shot release?

Is follow through continued after shot release for several seconds with trigger, sighting, body?

Further to the discussion on trigger importance over sight alignment, is the subject of position.

If the position is correct, so that each time the pistol is raised to the target, it should line up in the centre of the target. It is most important that the shooters do not continually try to line up the pistol from left to right and try to find the sights, so grip alignment is also important without unlocking the wrist.

Check position first without pistol sighting down the "V" of the hand between the thumb and trigger finger. Then attain grip and check grip alignment. Are the sights aligned when raised with eyes closed? If not, loosen gripping hand and rotate pistol in hand "slightly" to align. Once aligned, the shooter may notice areas of the grip which need alterations for comfort and fit. Either adding or subtracting wood.

Have attained position, there is no further reason to be concerned about the pistol moving out of the shooters area of aim (somewhere under the black). Therefore they can concentrate on sight clarity and alignment with most focus of attention on trigger smoothness. Again emphasise that once in "your" area of aim, start and continue pressing even after the shot release.

Using this in relation to Rapid Fire Stages is most important as the lift needs to be central, smooth with a greater acceptance of sight alignment (wobble) but total commitment to trigger press being smooth and directly to the rear.

Begin with a session on the line, starting out with a blank card un-timed. Perform a series of lifts into the area to be "accepting of the wobble" and sharpening sight alignment. Repeat but with a slight trigger overload (instead of firing a shot): watch the sights closely to see that they do not move as the trigger is loaded (this confirms a straight trigger pull). Repeat again with sight trigger overload and watch careful on releasing the trigger overload - strive keep the sights aligned as the pressure is released.