

WARM UP!

Warming up to Pistol Shoot?

Just standing still and holding up a pistol to shoot doesn't seem too strenuous. Why should I warm up as I'm not exerting any muscles like a proper athlete?

This has always been a little grey area. Many shooters may find they start a match poorly and then about 20 or so shots into a match start to shoot better and end up finishing strongly. But the damage was done at the start of the match, throwing points away just settling into a rhythm, getting the feel of the gun, getting the mind on the task at hand.

Yes pistol shooters do use some muscles. Shoulder muscles, arm, wrist, hand, legs, back muscles to name but a few. These muscles can be warmed up with simple stretching and holding exercises, not because you may risk muscle strain like a footballer might, but to get the body acclimatised to the position of shooting and get the action of raising the pistol as smooth as possible and increasing body awareness. You've probably just arrived at the range and stepped out of the car and onto the line. Or done a brief walk around the range and then got ready to shoot.

Warming up also means to warm up "mentally". The action of doing holding, dry firing, cocking the pistol, attaining stance is all preparation to get you "in the groove" to fire that first competition shot.

Pistol shooting is mostly a "mental" sport with little physical activity, but if you can get an advantage over an opponent by doing a little dry firing, holding etc. before the match starts, it will certainly make sense to "warm up".

Dry firing before the match gets the mind into gear as to what you are looking for to fire a good shot. Am I holding as good as I normally do? Am I "seeing" sights as clearly as I normally do? Is my trigger press smooth? Have I got my mind on the task at hand?

Get all of these facets of shooting right even before sighters and you'll be way in front of the field before the first competition shot. Once you start sighters, it is a time of being sure you are employing all the skills required to fire a good controlled shot. Firing shots in sighters that are controlled, smooth shots, allows you to judge groups, as you may have shot on a different range previously, different lighting etc. Groups can change from day to day, same range, same pistol and same bay. The body changes day to day. The holding may be slightly higher or lower this day.

Go back through your past results, look at the start of a match, the middle and the end. You may find a pattern forming which can be analysed and you never know, you may even pick up a few more points, which is what pistol shooting is all about.