

SHOOTING LESSON

STEER CLEAR OF SEESAWS

How good is your gun mount? Master this part of shooting and your hit rate will soar, says **Dr Malcolm Plant**

When you pull the trigger to shoot a clay, the shotgun should be next to your cheek and, with a well fitting gun, it will be comfortably in contact with your shoulder.

It is important that the priorities are in that order - mount to your cheek and eye and rely on your gun-fit and your stance to place the gun in your shoulder.

Your line of sight is along the gun's rib and the gun is pointing where you are looking, so long as you keep your head firmly on the stock, the shot will go where you want it to go. So why don't we always adopt this start position for the gun?

Well some competitors do. Trap shooting enthusiasts are glued to their stocks every Sunday morning, shooting down-the-line or Olympic Trap, for example. The rules allow a mounted gun and the shooting process needs to be very prompt, but not rushed, to achieve success.

However, if you are shooting FITASC Sporting or Olympic skeet, you must have the gun stock significantly demounted, below the marker tape on your shooting vest.

PICK YOUR POSITION

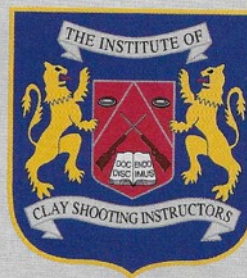
Current rules for English skeet and Sporting allow any gun start position and indeed you will see very competent shots using the full range of possibilities from gun-up, to just out of the cheek, to full demount.

If you are using Sporting or skeet disciplines to practice game or pigeon shooting, it is important to use a fully demounted gun. You are not going to wander around a field all day with your gun in your cheek, are you?

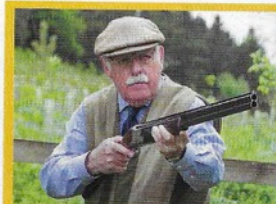
So what is the most efficient way to hold the gun while we wait for the target and how does the gun move from gun-down to the cheek and eye?

Take a right-to-left crossing clay, most targets have an element of 'crossing' unless they are 'true driven' straight towards you over your head, or straight away from the shooting position.

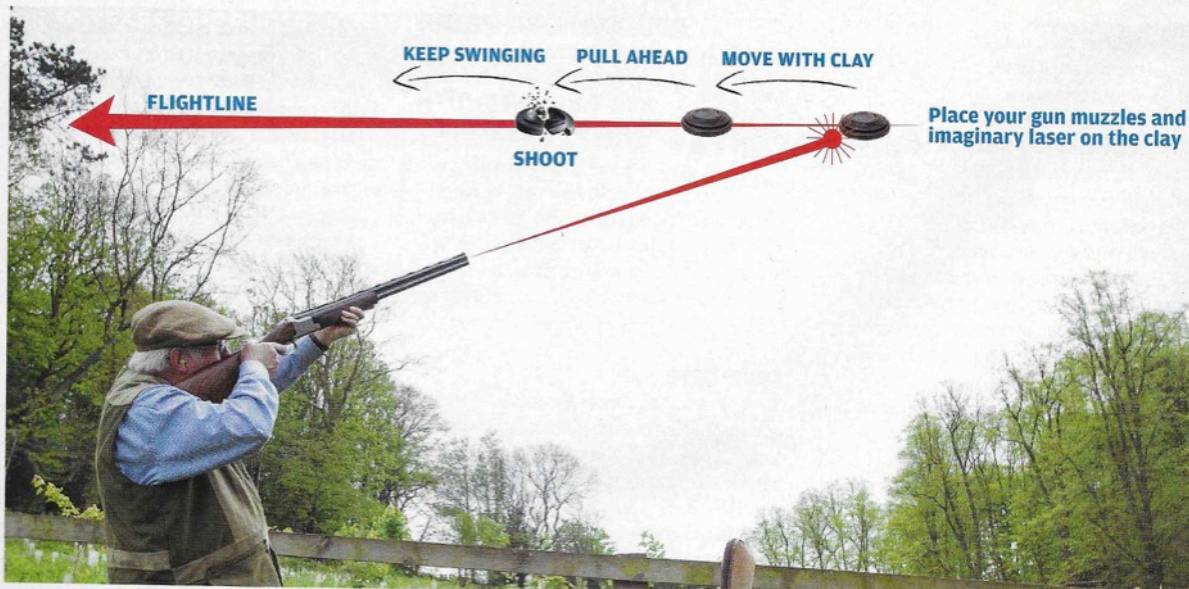
Imagine a laser coming from the muzzles of your gun reaching out to the clay, point this laser just under the flightline of the clay, so when you see the clay the laser can be placed on the flightline. If we are using the favoured method of 'point at the target and pull ahead' discussed last month, then point the laser at the clay.



The Institute of Clay Shooting Instructors was formed in the 1980s to provide qualified coaches with opportunities for further professional development, by the provision of seminars, workshops, practical activities and educational visits. ICSI coaches can be found at www.ICSI.org.uk

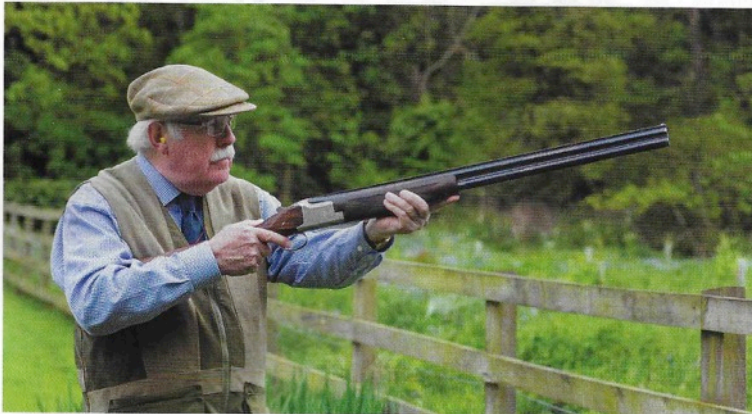


Dr Malcolm Plant is chairman of the Institute of Clay Shooting Instructors and a Clay Pigeon Shooting Association senior coach.

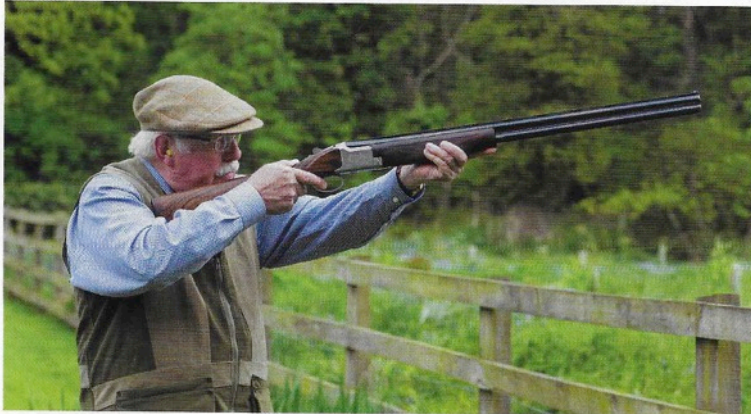


"Imagine a laser coming from the muzzles of your gun reaching out to the clay, point this just under the flightline," says Malcolm

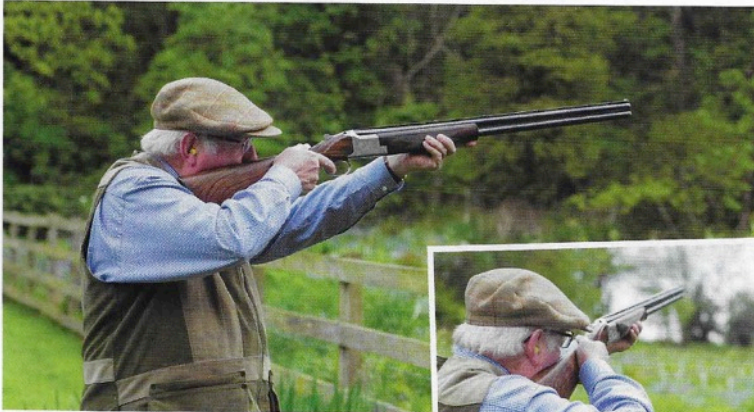
Join the CPSA today as a full member and you'll enjoy first class insurance cover, great money saving member benefits and the opportunity to shoot for your club, county, and even your country, providing you qualify!



Point your "laser" at the clay and keep pointing as you move both hands...



...bringing the stock up towards your cheek. You need to move both hands in unison...



...moving the gun along the flightline until the gun's rib is brought to your eye and line of sight

GOOD TECHNIQUE

Whatever shooting technique we are going to use, we know what the flightline will be, because we have used our time watching previous shooters.

Point the laser at the clay and keep pointing as you move both hands to get the gun stock to your cheek. This requires both hands to move in unison, moving the gun along the flightline while the gun's rib is brought to your eye and line of sight.

Your front hand should steer the barrels on to the clay and your trigger hand should move the stock to your cheek. The upper body rotates.

It is important that the rear hand does not move so quickly that the gun seesaws around the front hand, if this happens the muzzles of the gun will then be moving in completely the wrong direction to start with and accuracy will be badly compromised. There should be no hint of getting the stock sorted out first and then going after the clay. This, however, is something novices often do, and it can be habit forming.

This seesaw effect also happens when the initial ready position sees the muzzles of the gun pointing too high, in the extreme at the sky above the shooter. This ready position is quite common in the game field and means that the first movement of the gun barrels is down to the flightline, where the barrels have to be decelerated and then reaccelerated along the flightline in a completely different direction.

KEEP THINGS SIMPLE

This, of course, is very time consuming and mechanically very inefficient. It's also a recipe for a missed shot.

The correct way is to always keep things simple by tailoring the gun start position, relative to your thorax and to the type of target you are going to shoot.

For a fast, squirty, quartering away target, have the stock close to your cheek.



It Pays to Belong to the CPSA

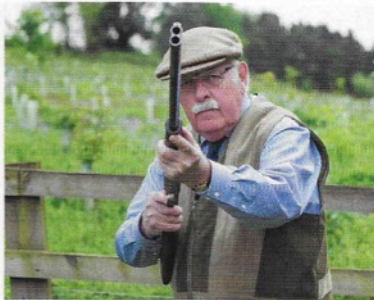
SHOOTING LESSON

LONG CROSSERS

For a long crosser, have a lower gun start position relative to your thorax. The objective is to make the shot instinctive so when the stock reaches your cheek you put on the required lead and pull the trigger.

With a long crosser, if the gun gets to your cheek too early there is a greater temptation to start measuring lead, by looking from target to gun, causing a miss.

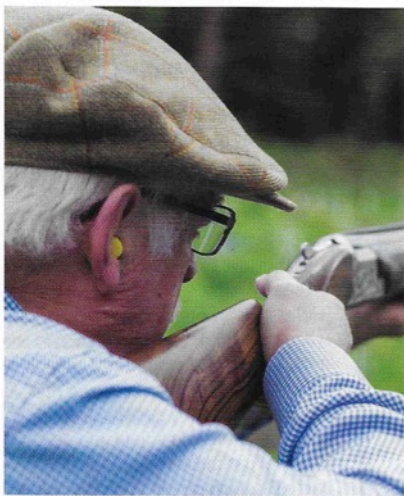
Mount the gun when you want to shoot the target. You'll hit it.



Be careful not to move the rear hand too quickly or point the muzzles too high...



...if you do, you risk the seesaw effect and starting with the gun in the wrong position



For a fast, quartering away target, keep the gun stock close to your cheek



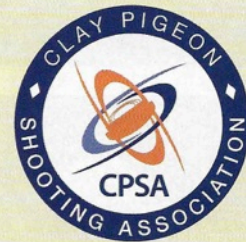
For a long crosser shot, you will need a lower gun start position relative to your thorax



MALCOLM'S TOP TIP

Practice your gun mount with an unloaded gun. Sports physiotherapists believe it requires several thousand repetitions to build up muscle memory and lack of usage leads to quite rapid decline.

NEXT TIME: Malcolm will be taking a look at crossers, both good and bad.



- » £10 million civil liability insurance cover for ALL shooting sports (except mounted hunting and subject to the policy document in force).
- » £30,000 personal accident cover.
- » £5 million professional indemnity insurance for coaches, instructors, safety officers, referees, affiliated county and regional committee members and volunteers.
- » Free advice service to all members, shoot organisers and affiliated clubs of all sizes.

NEED EXTRA HELP?

To check out previous tuition articles, visit www.sportinggun.co.uk

PROBLEM WITH YOUR SHOOTING?

If you have a question about your shooting technique, write to *Sporting Gun*, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London. SE1 0SU or email sportinggun@ipcmedia.com and we'll get one of our expert coaches to answer it.

PRIVATE TUITION

If you're looking for shooting tuition, pay a visit to the CPSA website at www.cpsa.co.uk/coaches to find shooting instructors and coaches in your area.

As well as covering you for clay and game shooting, your comprehensive insurance will allow you to participate in many other sporting activities, including:

- Rifle shooting
- Airgun shooting
- Wildfowling
- Stalking
- Beating
- Picking up
- Vermin & Pest Control
- Loading, including black powder
- Angling from dry lan