

The Fundamentals of Marksmanship

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Fundamentals

Shooting is a sport that requires the mastery of 7 fundamental skills. The shooter that masters all 7 of these will place every shot in the 10 ring, nearly every time. These fundamentals are easy to learn, but difficult to master. The degree to which you master ALL of these skills will determine how well you shoot. Some people master these fundamentals quickly, others take time.

Shooting is a unique sport in that natural talent counts for less as time goes on. The best shooters are not necessarily those who started out shooting the best. The best shooters are normally those who work the hardest at mastering these 7 skills.



Fundamentals

The Seven Fundamentals of Shooting are:

1. Sight Alignment
2. Sight Picture
3. Natural Point of Aim (NPA)
4. Breath Control
5. Hold
6. Trigger Control
7. Follow-Through



Fundamentals

1. Sight Alignment

Proper alignment includes centering the front sight inside the entire opening of the rear sight. Your front sight should take up about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total field of vision inside your rear sight.



Fundamentals

2. Sight Picture

A correct sight picture means that the target is centered inside the front sight.

“3 Rings of light”

* Remember, that a perfect sight picture doesn't mean a perfect “10” shot UNLESS you still have proper sight alignment. Eventually this will come automatically to you, but in the beginning, you will have to do it consciously.



Fundamentals

3. Natural Point of Aim (NPA)

To achieve this, you must learn to place your body in it's shooting position so that your bones (skeletal structure) are holding the rifle steady, NOT your muscles.

To check your NPA, get into shooting position and when you feel ready to take your shot close your eyes and take two long, slow breaths, then open your eyes. If you still have proper sight alignment and sight picture, then you have achieved NPA.



Fundamentals

4. Breath Control

Breath control in shooting is a conscious effort of inhaling and exhaling and stopping your breath at a certain point to settle, hold and take your shot on the target.

- a. Deep breath in
- b. Exhale
- c. Natural Respiratory Pause (NRP)
- d. Hold for 5-7 seconds
- e. shoot
- f. If you cannot shoot before 7 seconds, take 3 breaths and start over
- g. “Overholding”



Fundamentals

5. Hold

Hold defines your ability to control the movements of the muzzle of your rifle while you are aiming.

As you start shooting, you may find “hold” to be largely unmanageable (particularly in the offhand position). Proper hold takes practice.

Training will allow your “hold” to become “smaller”.



Fundamentals

6. Trigger Control

Trigger control is the timing used to shoot a good shot within the shooter's hold

The firing hand is placed on the pistol grip with the ring and middle finger pulling the rifle stock back into the shoulder, the pinkie and thumb laying "dead", and the last pad of the "pointer finger" resting on the center of the trigger.

When all of the other fundamentals are achieved, the trigger is pulled directly to the rear. The trigger is drawn in 2 stages, first, taking up the "slack", second pulling it rearward until the lever breaks "cleanly" and fires the shot.



Fundamentals

7. Follow-Through

This is the conscious action of keeping your rifle, body, trigger finger, eye and mind directed toward the center of the target AFTER the rifle has fired.

1. Keeps the shot from being affected as it goes down the barrel
2. Keeps your mind focused on the shot and not “checking the target” until the entire shot has been fired
3. Eliminates “jerking” or trying to “catch” the target as it passes through the sights
4. Forces you to “read recoil” or look for the target to “bounce”



Fundamentals

“Calling your shots”

BEFORE you look through your scope, predict where you hit.

Consider:

1. What you saw during your hold/sight alignment/sight picture
2. How you timed the trigger squeeze
3. What you felt at the instant you shot
4. Did you follow through? Did you “jerk”?
5. Was there pressure on my muscles (not using NPA)?



Questions?

