

Basic Skeet

*By
Max Weston*

*Skeet Fundamentals
for the
Level One Coach
2nd Edition*

Copyright 1992

CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 3
Trivia	4
Foundation	5
Safety	6
Gun Fit	7
Typical U/O Shotgun	9
Reference Point	10
Feet Position	10
Hold Position	11
Mental Rehearsal	12
Lead or Forward Allowance	13
Shooting Gear	16
Semi Auto or Over & Under	16
Gun up or down	17
One Eye or Two	17
Interesting facts	18
Afflictions	18
Station by Station	19
Conclusion	31
Recommended Reading	32
Recommended Viewing	32
Acknowledgments	32
Endorsements	32

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this coaching manual is to introduce the 'LEVEL ONE' coach to the fundamentals and technique required to teach the 'novice', the basics of skeet shooting. It must be said at this point that this manual is to be used as a coaching aid for **STANDARD SKEET ONLY, NOT THE ISU DISCIPLINE**.

The first requirement of any coach is to make the pupils feel comfortable and relaxed. You should start by explaining to the pupils what they are going to learn, and the procedure, you as the coach, will be using to teach them. If you are to coach more than a squad of novices, I suggest a group discussion takes place, prior to actual shooting. The introductory talk should be interesting and factual, covering;

- GUN SAFETY**
- CLUB RULES & ASSOCIATION RULES RELATING TO ETIQUETTE**
- HOW SKEET DEVELOPED**
- SHOOTING PROCEDURE AND THE COACHING FORMAT.**

Pupils should be encouraged to ask questions at any time during the group discussion or on the skeet layout. At this early stage it is important to gain the pupils trust and to see that every novice enjoys the experience of skeet shooting. After the group discussion is over you can start shooting.

The first station we attempt with any novice, is station 7.

NEVER SHOOT A FULL ROUND with any beginner.

The reason we start with station 7 is simply that building the novices confidence is the most important criteria for any coach, and must be considered the number one priority. A new shooter who feels good about his or her progress, builds confidence quickly, and at the same time generates trust in the teacher.

A demonstration of shooting a high single target, a low single target, and then doubles, before you start, is always a good approach. This procedure also contributes to the novices confidence in the coach. In the event that you miss a target during your demonstration, tell the squad that it was a 'female' and you left it to breed. This enforces the point that we shoot for enjoyment, and that anyone can miss a target, even the coach.

In the following chapters, all the coaching criteria is set out, and it's up to the coach to introduce this information to the shooters as required. In the event of the first contact being a seminar, all of the subject matter should be covered prior to shooting.

All instructions here in are for RIGHT handed shooters, LEFT handed shooters should reverse relevant procedure.

TRIVIA

Skeet shooting started in the United States in the early 1900's with its original format, quite different to that which is experienced today.

In its beginnings, the layout was a full circle arrangement with the shooting stations set out around the perimeter in the same positions as hour markings on a clock face. There was a high house located at the 12 o'clock position only, no low house existed in this original format.

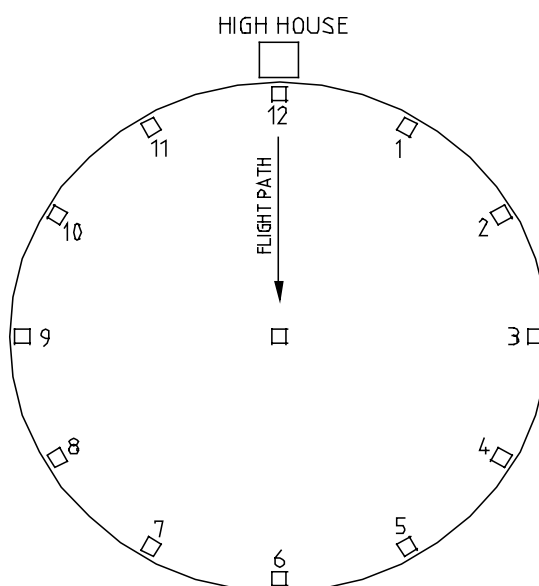
The system was designed to simulate game birds flying at various angles to the shooter, this helped prepare the hunter for the coming season. The number of targets shot was based on a box of 25 cartridges, with 2 targets shot on each of the 12 stations and the final '25th' target shot from the centre of the layout, now known as 'station 8'.

The first name given to this format was 'Around the Clock' and became extremely popular. Unfortunately as the population started to encroach on the shooting grounds, it was soon realised that in the interests of safety and future survival of the sport, shooting in the direction of the marauding housing estates had to stop.

The dilemma faced by shooters was, move the complex or shoot only in one direction, (away from the housing estates). The decision was made to cut the field in half and add a "low house" to the opposite end of the lay-out, this simulated birds taking off at ground or water level. This system has remained principally unchanged to this day.

As this new concept was radically different, a new name was required to identify it, so a nation wide competition was held to choose a new name. The name 'Skeet' was chosen from thousands submitted.

The word '**SKEET**' is derived from the Swedish term '**TO SHOOT**'.



FOUNDATION

In the following pages you will read various subject matter relating to the '**BASICS**' or '**FOUNDATION**' of shooting. The basic fundamentals of shooting is the foundation on which the novices shooting future is built, so teach them well, for it is your job as a coach to impart the benefit of your experience and expertise to the best of your ability. Remember what you teach and how you teach it, not only affects the novice but also has a long term affect on your sport.

The shooting technique I have out lined is for the novice shooter and should be used as a starting point only. The system will vary slightly from shooter to shooter, depending on individual needs. As the shooter progresses, time will allow them to settle into their own technique. In order to do this, they need to start.

So let's start!

There are 6 key stones in any good shooting foundation, they are;

- SAFETY**
- GUN FIT**
- FEET POSITION**
- HOLD POSITION**
- MENTAL REHEARSAL**
- FOLLOW THROUGH**

SAFETY

The first subject covered whether at a seminar or on the skeet field is SAFETY. This subject must be fully covered prior to any shooting.

Under no circumstances should any novice be allowed to load 2 shells into the gun while shooting single targets. The loading of 2 shells should only be allowed once the coach is satisfied that the shooter is a competent gun handler.

It is highly recommended that the coach stands just to the rear of the shooter. By this I mean close enough to prevent the shooter from turning around with a closed gun.

While on the subject of safety, it's always a good idea to take the opportunity to make pertinent Club and Association rules known to new shooters as well, thereby reducing chances of any dangerous or embarrassing situations.

GUN FIT

This subject is the most ignored and least understood in our sport. I must say at this point, only the very basic needs of the shooter be looked at. The reason being that a minimum of 12 months shooting experience needs to be acquired before precise gun fit will be of any real benefit. Except however, where the shooter is showing signs of discomfort or is encountering a severe problem relating to gun fit.

As stated previously, gun fit in detail, should only be undertaken once the shooter has established a distinct shooting style, thus making any changes relative. This area of expertise should be addressed later at coaching level 2, rather than level 1.

In order to establish whether gun fit needs attention in the early stages of shooting and in the interests of shooter comfort, I will outline the symptoms and results of improper gun fit, step by step as follows;

❑ TRIGGER PULL LENGTH

This dimension is taken from the centre of the trigger face to the centre of the butt plate or recoil pad. If the stock is too long, this will lead to shooting across the chest, i.e.; the shooter is trying to compensate for a stock that is too long. If the shooter is right handed, the gun will swing easier from right to left rather than from left to right. High house targets can be missed due to the shooters swing being restricted.

If the stock is too short, the shooter tends to 'crowd' or crawl along the stock. If the stock is exceptionally short, it's possible for the thumb on the pistol grip hand to hit the shooters nose during recoil, potentially causing flinching.

Broadly speaking it's better to have a stock that is too short (not exceptionally short) rather than too long.

❑ HEIGHT OF COMB

This measurement determines whether the gun shoots high or low. When checking this dimension, the centre of the eye must be just above the rib (about 3 mm) and in line with the centre of the rib. If the eye is too high above the rib, the shooter will consistently shoot over the top of targets, and could end up with a bruised cheek. If the stock is too low, then shooting under targets will result.

❑ CAST

Cast comes in two forms, CAST ON & CAST OFF.

CAST OFF; is when the stock is bent away from the face of a right handed shooter.

CAST ON; is when the stock is bent away from the face of a left handed shooter.

Generally speaking the type of shooter that requires CAST OFF is right handed and is of heavy build, this is because the distance from the shoulder pocket to the cheek bone is usually greater than that of a shooter of normal stature.

If a right handed shooter requires cast off, when the gun is mounted, the shooter will be looking down the left hand side of the rib and will look across the gun instead of along it, or will cant the head to look along the rib.

This will produce the undesirably consistent result of shooting behind high targets and in front of low targets, or looking in front and shooting behind.

❑ **PITCH**

This is the angle of the butt plate in relation to the rib. It is measured as PITCH UP or PITCH DOWN. Pitch is directly related to the shooters chest profile. If a shooter has a barrel chest for instance, more pitch down is required than a shooter of slighter build.

As a 'rule of thumb' the amount of 'pitch down' required on a skeet gun with 28" barrels, for a person of normal build, would be approximately 60mm or 2 1/2".

Pitch is a contributing factor in whether or not a gun shoots high or low. It also effects the movement of the gun on the shoulder when fired (up or down).

The above examples on gun fit are not meant to be used as a means of gun fitting procedure, they are merely a guide to assist the level one coach in identifying potential problems in this area.

If a problem is found, it is important to seek the opinion of someone who is a recognised authority on this subject.

❑ **NOTE:-**

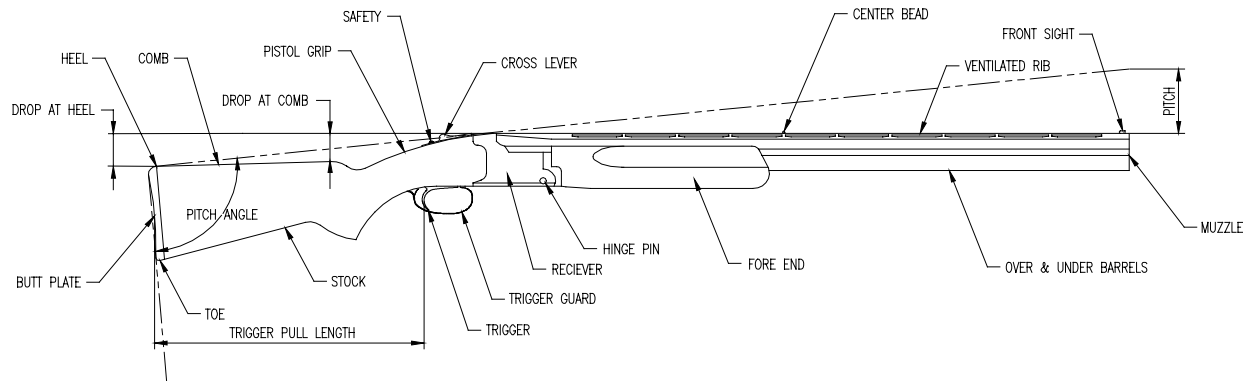
Particular attention must be paid to the requirements of women and children.

Women, because of their obviously different profile to that of men.

Children, because of their continuously changing form as they grow.

It must also be remembered, that the needs of a TRAP shooter are vastly different to that of a SKEET shooter.

UNDER & OVER SKEET GUN



TYPICAL O/U SHOT GUN

REFERENCE POINT

There are a number of markers on a skeet field showing;

- OUT OF BOUNDS**
- LEGAL DISTANCE**
- MINIMUM DISTANCE**
- MAXIMUM DISTANCE**
- CENTRE MARKER (HEIGHT STICK)**

The most important marker of all is the centre marker or “height stick”, which is used to set up the targets so they conform to the rules of skeet. The “height stick” is removed after setting up the targets and, you guessed it!, we have no reference point or station 8 boundary marker. The height stick, once removed needs to be replaced with a suitable marker to show where the centre of the skeet field is.

The biggest favor you can do for the novice is mark the centre of the skeet field, or in other words **PROVIDE A REFERENCE POINT.**

It’s a good idea to use a short coloured stick or some other means that clearly marks the centre of the field. Be sure not to use something which is too prominent or distracting to the shooter. A 1 metre length of orange electrical conduit is good.

Now that you have a reference point, its value as a coaching aid for feet and hold position, will prove to be invaluable, **SO DON’T FORGET IT.**

FEET POSITION

The position of the feet will determine where the gun is pointed at the time of firing and is in direct relation to the crossing point, or the middle of the skeet field. The novice should be encouraged to shoot the targets as close to the crossing point as possible for outgoing targets, and a little after for incoming targets.

When giving this instruction, the coach should emphasise the importance of shooting only when the sight picture is correct. We don’t want the new shooter to get into the habit of spot shooting. The correct timing and shooting ability will improve naturally with time.

When shooting high house targets if the shooter is standing with his/her feet too far around towards the high house, the result will be that the shooter will run out of swing and follow through, inevitably push the gun away from the face, or roll the torso and shoot under the target.

If the shooter is standing too far in the opposite direction, the shooter will be wound up and forced to hold the gun across the chest. This causes the butt to be mounted against the upper arm and not the shoulder, so when the body starts to unwind, the stock is too far from the face, resulting in the shooter looking across the gun rather than along it.

It's a good idea to show novices at this point, how to swing the gun by rotating the body, starting from the ankles.

NOTE:- In the 'station by station' chapter, it will be noticed that no exact position for the feet has been specified. This is a deliberate oversight.

Due to the fact that every shooter is built differently, it is not possible to specify one feet position that suits all.

It is up to the coach to face the shooter at the point where the target will be shot, and in so doing, will automatically end up with the shooter's feet in the correct position or close to it.

'DONT FORGET TO ALLOW FOR FOLLOW THROUGH'

HOLD POSITION

This is the place where the gun is pointed when the shooter is ready to call for the target.

The hold position is most important because it becomes the point from which the swing starts and also the first reference between the shooter, the gun and the target.

If the hold position is incorrect, ie; too close to the trap house, the shooter will start the swing by jumping at the target and most likely shoot prematurely, and in some instances, catch the target late, run out of swing, and shoot with a dead or slowing gun.

If the gun is held too far from the trap house, the shooter will be waiting for the target to reach the gun, and cause the shooter to stab at the target (swing too short) or spot shoot (shooting with a stationary or 'dead' gun). In the other extreme starting the swing late and running out of swing.

If the gun is held too high, the target passes under the gun and the shooter loses sight of it momentarily causing him to swing violently, pulling the barrels down.

If the hold position is too low the shooter will at least have the benefit of maintaining sight of the target. However, as well as swinging the gun along the flight path of the target, the gun must now be pushed upward, which is not considered good practice, as it has the effect of cutting the target off.

The flow of the gun along the flight path must be;

A SMOOTH SINGLE DIRECTIONAL MOVEMENT

Remember there are as many hold positions as there are shooters. It is the alert coach that will find the right spot for each individual. The relative hold positions for each station will be covered in the station by station chapter, later in this manual.

MENTAL REHEARSAL

This is the picture the shooter paints in his/her mind just prior to calling for the target. Remember that we should not introduce this particular skill too early in the coaching process. The temptation to impart too much technical information too soon, should be resisted.

You as the coach, must best decide when the pupil is ready for this step. This skill will come with experience. Not only do we need to develop mental rehearsal skills, we also need to develop mental awareness skills. This is to remember the sequence of events immediately after the shot has been fired. This is the first step to self assessment and is a big asset in any shooter's 'bag of tricks' if they intend pursuing skeet shooting competitively.

The most important thing in rehearsing mentally, is to do it in the same time frame as the sequence of events. If you find visualizing in slow motion helps, then use it, but always try to finish the procedure in real time. Mental rehearsal for the shooter is a 'dream standing up' so if a shooter calls for a target and misses, he/she has not done what was rehearsed and should immediately be aware of what went wrong, because the sight picture will be different to that which was visualized. An example of mentally rehearsing station 3 high house target, after going through the ritual of checking feet and hold position, is as follows;

- 1) **LOOK INTO THE SPACE BETWEEN THE GUN AND THE HOUSE.**
- 2) **CALL PULL**
- 3) **LOOK HARD AT THE TARGET**
- 4) **MOVE THE GUN 3 FEET AHEAD OF THE TARGET**
- 5) **PULL THE TRIGGER AND WATCH THE TARGET BREAK**
- 6) **FOLLOW THROUGH**

From the time the target is seen leaving the high house, and actually shot, takes less than half a second.

Mental rehearsal must include seeing the target break and following through.

Let me explain why.

Any mental rehearsal procedure must always finish with a positive result. If a penalty goal kick is taken in a football match, the player taking the kick does not just mentally rehearse the kick without the result. He mentally sees the ball pass through the posts and even visualizes the crowd response. The point is, the rehearsal must be positive and realistic.

No sports person is motivated by negatives.

Just as shooting itself is a 'closed skill', so is mental rehearsal, and it is high on the list of priorities in self motivation and the self assessment process.

Mental rehearsal is a learned skill and will take time to develop. If the coach is tuned into this particular subject, it will reflect his long term success as his pupils will stand out as thinking shooters, capable of above average consistency, and regularly present in the winners circle.

Remember to;

- Rehearse positively**
- Focus on the next target (not the target just shot)**
- Become ritualistic in your approach**
- Apply yourself fully (on the station) NOT BETWEEN**
- Be happy with your shooting but never satisfied**
- Enjoy the company of your squad**

LEAD OR FORWARD ALLOWANCE

There are 4 methods which can be employed to shoot a skeet target and they can be used individually or in combination with each other.

- Swing through**
- Sustained or Constant lead**
- Pointing out**
- Combination of the above**

Swing through

Probably the most used method of all and has been the standard format used for years in our coaching system. The swing is started from behind the target, and along the flight path. As the muzzle passes target the trigger is pulled and the follow through completes the sequence.

While this particular method is fine for trap shooting, and also has a place in skeet shooting (once the shooter has acquired reasonable shooting skills) it is not the best method for the large majority of novices. More on this subject later.

Sustained or constant lead

This method of shooting targets is primarily the reserve of the experienced shooter and is common amongst the "AA" fraternity (even if not on all stations). For instance some shooters shoot outgoing (fast targets) H1,H2,H3,H4,L4,L5,L6,H8,L8 using the swing through method and incoming (slow targets)L1,L2,L3,H5,H6,H7 using the sustained lead or pointing out method.

There is only one target which cannot be shot using the sustained lead method and this is low 7. Unlike swing through, the sustained lead method requires the gun to be started ahead of the target and the target is not allowed to pass the muzzle. As the correct lead is established the trigger is pulled and the follow through completes the shot. The hold position for sustained lead is much further from the trap house than that which is utilized for swing through.

Pointing out.

This system incorporates both swing through and partly sustained lead and is considered by the writer as being by far the best method to use in the coaching of novices. The hold position is the same as that which is utilized for the swing through method. The muzzle is swung along the flight path coming from behind the target and once the correct lead is established then the trigger is pulled and the follow through completes the shot.

The primary benefit of this method is that the novice learns the importance of lead and how to use it, the precision necessary for the swing through method will develop naturally as the shooter gains experience.

The coach must look through the eyes of the pupil in order to understand the shooters perspective. When a target is released, it appears to explode from the trap house and is out of sight before the shooter can respond, this is the prime reason for using a method which gives the new shooter as much time as possible to shoot.

In the early stages, it does not matter if the targets are shot late. The main aim is to build confidence in breaking targets. The skill of hitting targets with good timing will come naturally with practice. The long term benefit that is derived from this method is that all three methods are being taught at once and the novice shooter will naturally embrace the method which suits them best while they develop their skills at skeet shooting.

□ Combination

A surprising number of good shots use a combination of the three systems of shooting skeet targets, in fact some even do so without fully realising it. If the **POINTING OUT** method is taught from day one, the benefits derived during long term coaching are numerous.

Most coaches tend to teach the system they themselves use to shoot skeet, without recognising the signals given by the pupil which may suggest an entirely different approach is required to take full advantage of his/her natural talents and abilities. If the coach is not aware of the three methods of shooting skeet targets, then it is impossible to read these signs and respond appropriately.

Skeet shooting is uniquely different to trap shooting and must be coached accordingly. It is not possible to use the same methods for both disciplines. Unfortunately for skeet, the large majority of coaches are active in Trap and simply superimpose the principals of one for the other (to the detriment of skeet)

It is probably a good time to point out the fact that this is not a discipline bashing exercise.

A good example (comparison wise) would be that you wouldn't use a soccer coach to teach aussie rules, even though both games are ball games they are uniquely different and must be coached that way.

There are obvious benefits for the shooter using the combination method either voluntarily or involuntarily, for example; Assume for the moment that you shoot all of your targets using the sustained lead method. Lets say that you arrive at the shoot and find out that you have left your reflexes at home because when you called for a high three it hurtled past your gun at the speed of light and you have to go chase it.

Obviously you cant shoot this target using your normal method so you have no choice but to either point it out or shoot it using the swing through method. Had you not have learned the alternative methods of shooting skeet targets a lost target would have resulted.

The very nature of the discipline of skeet demands greater flexibility in the shooter and having the three methods of shooting in your arsenal will ensure that you become a more comprehensive and successful competitor and so doing will build a better future for the sport.

SHOOTING GEAR

Shooters should as a matter of course, build up a shooting kit and most do. Shooting apparel required should be kept in a bag dedicated to carrying the essential equipment such as;

- Gun Jacket
- Gloves
- Shooting glasses
- Ear muffs or plugs
- Shooting cap
- Wet weather gear
- Handicap card

There is nothing worse than arriving at a shoot, to find that something has been forgotten. Good stable footwear is essential together with sweat absorbing socks. Wear long or short pants, which ever is most comfortable, with a shirt that has a soft collar and allows good free movement without restricting swing.

Ladies must remember that bra straps having buckles or clasps in the gun mounting area should be avoided.

Semi Auto or Over & Under

Coaches are asked this question many times and except for unusual circumstances, it comes down to finances or personal choice. The proper course of action is to explain to the shooter the pro's and con's of each style of gun and wherever possible, let the shooter try a variety of guns to establish a preference.

Slightly built women or children could be encouraged to use Semi Auto's if recoil is perceived as being a problem. Keeping in mind that the introduction of the 28 & 24gm loads have considerably reduced recoil in the target ammunition area so therefore is becoming a diminishing problem.

If a shooter expresses a desire to shoot a variety of disciplines then a multi choked gun could be the answer either in semi auto or over & under.

In spite of what style of gun is preferred, if skeet is going to be taken seriously, then a perfectly fitted, dedicated skeet gun will be required, and no compromise is possible.

Gun up or gun down?

With regard to the novice **DEFINITELY UP** The last thing a new shooter needs is the added burden of having to mount the gun as well as hit the targets.

Shooting gun down takes years of practice, and if employed gun fit becomes a factor of prime importance. Because it is not practical to fit a novices gun for the first twelve months of shooting, teaching gun down at this stage is not recommended. It is the coaches responsibility to remove as many hurdles as possible and concentrate on building confidence in the new shooter.

One eye or two

This question is asked by many shooters, and if not, the subject is often overlooked by coaches. The answer is simple enough **TWO** eyes are better than one, however the reasons why are a lot more complex.

The main advantage to binocular vision (the use of both eyes) is that peripheral vision is increased by 100% or put simply two eyes are twice as good as one. Depth perception is improved immeasurably, this is the eyes ability to gauge distance to the target. A one eyed shooter has a distinct disadvantage compared to a shooter using two.

Try this simple experiment, when next driving the car in traffic, close one eye and notice how difficult it is to judge the distance to the vehicle in front, or try running up or down a set of stairs with one eye closed. In reality you would not do either of these two things so why try to shoot a clay target using half of your resources.

This does not mean that a shooter who has had the misfortune of losing the sight of an eye cannot shoot skeet, it just means that they must learn to compensate for their impediment, through hard work and determination they will overcome this hurdle.

There are many top shots around the world that shoot using one eye although this is usually because of necessity rather than choice.

Eye dominance is important and coaches should check each pupil for identification of the master eye. Have the pupil with both eyes **open**, point their right index finger at the coach's right eye (**do this 3 or 4 times**) If the pupils right eye is dominant, the right eye, the right finger and the coach's right eye will all be in line, if not, repeat the procedure using the left eye and index finger.

If alignment still does not occur then the eyes are of equal dominance.

If a situation occurs where the shooter is right handed and has a dominant left eye or eyes of equal dominance the problem can be addressed as follows;

- (1) The shooter can close one eye (least preferred option.)
- (2) The shooter can squint one eye until the gun eye takes over.
- (3) Using trial and error place a round adhesive spot on the lens of the shooting glasses, at the point where clear vision of the master eye is impaired enough for the gun eye to take over. Depth perception is only slightly impaired and the shooter still has the benefit of 100% peripheral vision. (Preferred option)

When placing the adhesive spot on the glasses, make sure that the spot is just big enough to do the job. Start with something about 8mm dia and work down from there.

INTERESTING FACTS

- The average human reflex time is approximately 15/100ths of one second. In that time a clay target with a velocity of 100ft per second will have traveled 15ft.
- Lets assume that a high house 2 target is being shot with the normal hold position being parallel to the trap house wall, or approx 12ft from the high house. Once the target has been called for and released, it is 15ft along its flight path, and 3ft in front of the average shooters gun before the shooter can react.
- If a shooter is using ammunition with a velocity of 1200ft per sec, shooting from station 4 and breaks the target over the crossing point, in the time taken from the instant that the shot charge starts to move along the gun barrel and reaches the point of impact, the clay target has traveled 5ft. Its no wonder that so many targets are missed from behind.

Note:- Examples above are based on a clay target being thrown with the velocity of 100ft per sec or 60Mph.

AFFLICTIONS

Flinching & Freezing

These problems are the scourge of the clay target shooter and have the potential to drive you crazy with frustration. I suffered with an extremely severe flinching problem back in the mid seventies and was at absolute wits end trying to grapple with this affliction.

Three years after I started shooting I moved back to Sydney and joined Hawkesbury

Gun Club and met up with a couple of shooters who had the same or similar problems as I did. Being new at the club I kept my problem to myself and just kept right on wrestling with it until I was approached by Adrian Hayes and Reg Clarke who both asked me why I was persevering with the continual flinching.

Reg actually read between the lines and honed in on the fact that I had reservations about fitting a release trigger to my gun because of the false belief that there was a stigma attached to people who use release trigger guns.

I was eventually at the crossroads after trying (and inventing) a number of fixes that didn't work I had a decision to make, either fit a release trigger or give up shooting and guess what? I'm still shooting.

I must say at this point that I am not saying that you should have a release trigger fitted as soon as you think you have a flinching or freezing problem but if all else fails you still have this option.

Shooters who suffer with this problem, in most cases have an over active subconscious self preservation system, by this I mean that flinching and freezing is brought about by an involuntary reaction to the anticipation of recoil. Even given that recoil is not a problem for most shooters that flinch, the subconscious sees that it is.

A release trigger is a mechanism that has the effect of fooling the subconscious.

It takes approximately 27 muscles in the upper and lower arm and hand to pull a trigger. It only takes 4 or 5 to let it go, so it would appear that the subconscious has lost control over the shooter once the use of a release trigger is utilised.

The fear of missing has also been considered responsible as a cause for freezing, as has the use of heavy loads. Because the fear of missing is brought about by the sub conscious then a release trigger will take care of this. Flinching or freezing brought about by the use of heavy ammunition is easily rectified **don't !**

If you have a flinching or freezing problem and are worried about what other shooters think, then don't. These people have never been confronted with this situation so fortunately for them they haven't had to deal with it.

The sport needs you so don't give up!

STATION by STATION

Before we start!

The most important requirement for the coach at this first stage of instruction is to get the feet position correct. The position of the feet indicates where the shot will be fired and how much follow through will be utilised. Feet position is directly related to the crossing point, so when we set a novice up to shoot any station, they must be positioned to shoot the target over the crossing point, or a little after. After shooting a high house target, the shooter must re-position the feet to shoot the low house target.

The hold position for the pointing out method is the same as for swing through and the hold position is related to feet position. Explanation as follows;

Quite often the novice is a little slow to react once the target has been released, so in order to give a little more time to see the target, read its direction and respond accordingly, move the hold position a little further out from the house. Because the

hold position is further out, the swing starts along the flight path later, so naturally the shot is fired later. In this situation, the feet must be moved accordingly.

In summary of the above, if the hold position is moved then the feet must be moved to suit.

The format in starting a novice shooter, is to commence with station 7, shooting singles, low first then the high house. Start doubles only when a good strike rate is achieved on single targets.

Move onto station 1 and repeat the procedure. After satisfactory progress, move onto stations 2 & 6 shooting incoming targets only until a good strike rate is achieved. The coach should be mindful of the fact that the novice is trying to absorb a myriad of information (feet position, hold position, leads etc) and to expect the novice to digest all this information in one visit is unrealistic **so go easy**.

REMEMBER A GOOD COACH WILL NOT LET A NOVICE SHOOT A COMPLETE ROUND OF SKEET FIRST UP!

Its all about building confidence.



High 1

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point.

STATION 1 HIGH

Position the feet so that the target can be shot comfortably over the crossing point allowing for follow through. The feet should be approximately shoulder width apart and positioned in such a way as to allow proper weight distribution, ie; 60% on the front foot 40% on the back foot. This allows the shooter to lean slightly forward and be able to absorb recoil without losing balance. This stance should be used on all stations.

The shooter should be positioned as far back on the station as possible and as far over to the left as possible.

Explanation; The further back the shooter stands the earlier you see the target, this is especially true for shooters wearing peaked caps.

The further to the left the right handed shooter stands the closer the target will be to being thrown over the shooters right shoulder.

The left handed shooter should stand as far to the right as possible so that the target leaves directly over the left shoulder.

The hold position is along the flight path and at an angle of about 45 degrees to the ground, this will allow target interception about 20ft from the trap house.

Focus your eyes on the flight path above the gun and call **pull!**, in a loud clear voice, move the gun in a downward arc until the muzzle is positioned about 6" (15cm) below the target, pull the trigger and follow through.



Low 1

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 1 LOW

Position the feet to shoot the target about halfway between the crossing point and the shooter. The hold position is about 10ft (3m) to left of the low house opening and about 3ft (1m) above it (this position will put the muzzle on the flight path)

Focus the eyes on the flight path between the low house and the gun call **pull!**.

Narrow the focus onto the target and move the muzzle 1ft (30cm) ahead of the target, pull the trigger and follow through. This target should be broken about halfway between the crossing point and the shooter.

STATION 1 DOUBLES

The feet position and hold position are the same as for the high 1 single, call **pull!**, fix your eyes on the target and move the gun in a downward arc and shoot 6" (15cm) below the target and watch the target break, after a short follow through, swing back to the low target and pull the trigger as you pass it and follow through.



High 2

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 2 HIGH

Position the feet to break the target over the crossing point allowing for follow through. Hold position is parallel with the trap house wall or about 12ft (3.6m) out from the trap and just under the target flight path. Focus your eyes on the target flight path between the trap house and the gun (**do not look in the window**) Call **pull!**, look hard at the target, swing the gun along the flight path passing the target and positioning the muzzle 12" to 18" (30cm to 45cm) in front of the target, pull the trigger and follow through.

Hint; Stand as far to the rear of the station as possible in order to see the target leave the trap without moving the head away from the stock.



Low 2

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 2 LOW

Position the feet to break the target just after it passes the crossing point, don't forget to allow for follow through. Hold position is 20ft (6m) along the flight path from the low house. Look into the space between the gun and the trap house call **pull!**, swing the muzzle along the target flight path until the muzzle is positioned 2ft (60cm) ahead of the target, pull the trigger and follow through breaking the target just after it has passed the crossing point.

Hint; Make sure that the target is visible above the gun 6" to 12" (15cm to 30cm) as the target will be losing height after it passes the crossing point and if the muzzle is not under the target flight path the shot will pass over the top of the target and a lost target will result.

STATION 2 DOUBLE

Feet and hold position are the same as for high 2 single. Call **pull!**, fix the eyes on the target, swing the muzzle along the target flight path opening up a 12" to 18" (30cm to 45cm) lead, pull the trigger and follow through. The low house target will be picked up in your peripheral vision (provided you have both eyes open) swing back and shoot the target as you pass it and follow through.

Hint; Stand at the rear of the station and shoot the first target as though it were a single (do not rush the first shot) Remember when swinging back to shoot the second target to keep the muzzle below the target as it will be shot well after the crossing point and will be losing height quickly.



High 3

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 3 HIGH

Position the feet to shoot the target just after the crossing point allowing for follow through, the hold position is 20ft (6m) from the high house and just below the target flight path, look into the space between the trap house and the muzzle (do not look in the window) call **pull!**, look hard at the target, move the muzzle 3ft (1m) ahead of the target pull the trigger and follow through.

Hint; Make sure that the swing starts from the ankles and not the waist and that the shooter is standing upright and not rolling the torso.



Low 3

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 3 LOW

Position the feet to break the target over or just after the crossing point allowing for follow through. The hold position is 20ft (6m) along the target flight path from the low house, look over the gun for the target focusing your eyes on the flight path between the gun and the trap house, call **pull!**, swing along the target flight path and position the muzzle 3ft (1m) ahead of the target breaking it over or a little after the crossing point and follow through.

Hint; From this point on the targets are quite often affected by bad background and can be difficult to see leaving the trap, in this case the hold position needs to be moved further out along the flight path in order to pick up the target later.

It is imperative that this target is not allowed to travel to far past the crossing point as the degree of difficulty increases dramatically with every metre. Once your lead is established **shoot don't hesitate.**



High 4

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 4 HIGH

Position the feet to break the target over or a little after the crossing point allowing for the required follow through. The hold position for this target is 20ft (6m) from the trap house and just below the target flight path. Look into the space between the trap house and the gun, call **pull!**, swing the muzzle along the flight path and establish a 4ft (1.2m) lead, pull the trigger and follow through.

Hint; Same as for high 3.



Low 4

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 4 LOW

Position the feet to shoot the target over the crossing point or a little after allowing for follow through. The hold position is 20ft (6m) from the low house and on the target flight path. Look over the gun into the space between the gun and the trap house, call **pull!**, move the muzzle along the target flight path and establish a 4ft (1.2m) lead, pull the trigger and follow through.

Hint; Firstly you must ask yourself, what is the background like, where will the target be along its flight path before I see it clearly, how will it effect my hold position?

Secondly you must remind yourself that you have gotten yourself into a groove (a psychological groove) and if this situation is not controlled this target **will be lost**.

Let me explain why!

Up until now all of the low house targets have been incomers (slow targets) and you have been conditioned (subconsciously) to expect a slow target from the low house and guess what? The low target explodes from the trap house and before you know it, it has gone past your gun at the speed of light, the shooter loses control of the situation and the shot becomes completely unglued.

Once the high target is demolished you need to stop and remind yourself to be ready for a fast target from the low house.

Step 1 Check the background and make whatever adjustments are needed to your feet and hold position in order to get onto the target early.

Step 2 Remind yourself that the target is now an outgoer and will appear to leave the trap quickly **so be ready**.

Step 3 Call for the target, when it appears look hard at it and narrow your focus, establish a 4ft (1.2m) lead, pull the trigger and follow through.



High 5

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 5 HIGH

Position the feet to break the target over the crossing point or a little after, hold position is 20ft (6m) along the flight path from the high house. Look into the area between the trap house and the gun, call **pull!**, establish a 4ft (1.2m) lead, pull the trigger and follow through.

Hint; Do not sit on this target! Try to break this target over the crossing point at all times. If you allow this target to run it will catch you out. Once this target has passed the crossing point it loses height very quickly and becomes increasingly harder to hit. Not only do you need to increase your lead you also need to be well and truly underneath it or a loss will result.



Low 5

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 5 LOW

Position the feet to break the target over the crossing point allowing for the required follow through, hold position is 20ft (6m) along the target flight path, look into the space between the gun and the trap house, call **pull!**, swing the muzzle along the target flight path and establish a 18" to 2ft (45cm to 60cm) lead, pull the trigger and follow through.

Hint; This target is probably the hardest target to see leaving the trap even when the background is good. **So be ready.**

Be sure not to hold too low on this target, quite often shooters hold too far under the flight path and find that they have to not only move the gun along the flight path but also need to push the barrels up to the target. This has the undesirable effect of cutting the target off.



High 6

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 6 HIGH

Position the feet to break the target half way between the crossing point and the low house allowing for the required follow through, hold position is 20ft (6m) along the target flight path from the high house, look into the space between the gun and the trap house, call **pull!**, swing the muzzle along the target flight path and establish a 18" to 2ft (45cm to 60cm) lead, pull the trigger and follow through.

Hint; Make sure that the target is above the gun (6" (15cm)) and keep your head firmly on the stock. Do not ride this target in to far.

STATION 6 LOW

Position the feet to break the target over the crossing point allowing for the required follow through, hold position is 12ft (3.6m) along the target flight path or parallel to the trap house wall, look into the space between the gun and the trap house, call **pull!**, swing the muzzle along the target flight path and establish a 6" to 12" (15cm to 300cm) lead, pull the trigger and follow through.

Hint; Make sure that the muzzle is on the flight path and not too low, for the same reasons as stated for low 5 **be alert**. Also because the right handed shooter has no choice but to look across the top of the gun into the space where the target will first appear, the gun is a lot more dominant in the peripheral vision, principally because the shooter is so close to the trap. If you notice the shooter has a jerky swing when shooting low 6 it could be that the shooters focus is jumping between the gun and the target and this is brought about because the eyes are focused on the gun rather than the flight path when the target is called for.

STATION 6 DOUBLES

Position the feet for the high target allowing for the required follow through, hold position is 12ft (3.6m) along the target flight path or parallel to the trap house wall, look into the space between the gun and the trap house, call **pull!**, swing the muzzle along the target flight path and establish a 6" to 12" (15cm to 300cm) lead, pull the trigger and follow through, then swing back, shooting the high target as you pass it and follow through.



Low 7

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point.

STATION 7 LOW

Position the feet to break the target over the crossing point, point the gun along the target flight path and look over the gun towards the crossing point, **call pull!**, narrow the focus and look hard at the target as it passes the gun, pull the trigger as the muzzle "touches" the target and watch the target break.

Hint; Do not try to shoot this target too fast, the pattern will not reach its full potential until the crossing point.



High 7

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

Feet position same as Low 7

STATION 7 HIGH

Position the feet to break the target halfway between the crossing point and the shooter allowing for the required follow through, hold position is 20ft (6m) along the target flight path, look into the space between the gun and the trap house, call **pull!**, swing the muzzle along the target flight path and establish a 6" to 12" (15cm to 300cm) lead, pull the trigger and follow through.

Hint; Make sure that the muzzle is slightly under the target about 6" (15cm) when the trigger is pulled because the target will be losing height reasonably quickly. Keep the head firmly on the stock and don't forget to follow through.

STATION 7 DOUBLES

Position the feet for the high target, point the gun along the target flight path and look over the gun towards the crossing point, **call pull!**, narrow the focus and look hard at the target as it passes the gun, pull the trigger as the muzzle "touches" the target and watch the target break, swing back for the high target shooting as you pass it and follow through.

Hint;

Do not rush the first shot, there is plenty of time to shoot this pair, keep the head on the stock and make sure that you are slightly under (6" (15cm)) the high target when swinging back and follow through.



High 8

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 8 HIGH

Position the feet to shoot this target directly above the shooters head, this will ensure that follow through is allowed for. The hold position is 3ft (1m) to the right of the trap house wall and 3ft (1m) above the target opening, this will place the muzzle on the target flight path. Look over the gun and focus the eyes on the flight path where the target will be first seen, **do not look in the window** Call **pull!**, Swing the gun quickly along the flight path, point the gun directly at the target, pull the trigger **do not hesitate** and follow through.

Hint; The dilemma we face on station 8 is that we only have half the time to shoot the target and the closer the target gets to the shooter, the smaller the pattern is, so what we need here from the shooters point of view is more speed and more accuracy. Even though these impediments are present, once the shooter gets to know how to shoot these two targets, they become much less daunting.



Low 8

Note: Arrow points toward crossing point

STATION 8 LOW

Position the feet to shoot this target directly above the shooters head, this will ensure that follow through is allowed for. The hold position is 3ft (1m) to the left of the trap house wall and 3ft (1m) above the target opening, this will place the muzzle on the target flight path. Look over the gun and focus the eyes on the flight path where the target will be first seen, **do not look in the window**. Call **pull!**, swing the gun quickly along the flight path, point the gun directly at the target, pull the trigger **do not hesitate** and follow through.

Hint; Make sure that the hand on the forend is not too far forward as this greatly restricts swing, If the gun is reasonably well balanced, the hand on the forend can be well back. If using a 30" gun as the writer does the forend hand needs to be further forward to handle the heavier/longer barrels.

Note:-

All feet positions shown in diagrams are to be used as a guide only **DO NOT** accept these feet positions as fixed, use them as a **STARTING POINT** only.

FOOTNOTE;

The coach should be aware that the leads indicated will only apply if the gun and the target are moving at the same speed. You will find that most novices cannot control the gun well enough to coordinate gun and target speed but don't despair this will happen gradually.

If you feel that the shooter is swinging faster than the target shorten the leads a bit at a time until good breaks are achieved.

Remember to feed the shooter positive information only, try not to say things like you shot behind that target (this is negative). It would be more appropriate to say, your swing was good and you followed through well, so all that is left to do now is to give the next target a little more lead (this is positive feed back).

PRAISE ONLY NEVER CRITICISE**CONCLUSION**

Finally I would like to say that I hope that all shooters who take the opportunity to use this manual, find it informative and helpful. It was written in the interests of better skeet shooting and as an aid to the coach to help them with the coaching of novices and shooters who require assistance to sort out problems which in most instances are related to basics.

If used as intended this manual will make the introduction to the sport of skeet shooting a little less painful and a lot more enjoyable.

Don't forget, If you see me on a skeet field somewhere and would like some help or to just say hello by all means do.

Good Shooting
Max Weston

RECOMENDED READING

- Score better at SkeetBy Fred Misildine (Winchester Press)
- Hartman on skeet.....By Barney Hartman
- Skeet shooting.....By D Le Braun (Remington Press)

RECOMENDED VIEWING

- See your leadsBy Ed Schearer VCR/PAL

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- The President and members of Edge Hill Gun Club
- The President and members of Azzurri Clay Target Club
- Linda Weston
- Peter Vosper

ENDORSEMENTS

- The Australian Clay Target Association
- The Australian Skeet Shooters Association
- The Australian Sporting Shooters Association