

The Art of Shooting a Spring Air Rifle

I am assuming that your rifle will have a scope mounted but the procedures apply equally to iron sights and that you are using a Sporter stock.

Make sure your rifle is unloaded. Bend the arm of your trigger hand to a right angle at the elbow. Place the side of the butt on your forearm and your trigger finger on the trigger. The buttpad should now be sitting comfortably against the bottom of your bicep. If the butt is too short there will be a gap and you will need to add a spacer to close this gap. If you have to reach for the trigger the butt will need to be made shorter (referred to as "Length of Pull").

A roll of narrow masking tape is required.

With all the accessories you want on your rifle mounted, find the balance point. This should be about 50mm in front of the trigger guard. If the balance point is not there ADD weight, usually to the butt, until this balance point is achieved.



{Finding the balance point}

Now measure 100mm from the trigger guard and place a "U" of masking tape around the stock. This is where the thumb and forefinger of your forehand is going to be placed to start Blud's 3 shot fine tuning methodology. Start by moving your hand forward by 3mm. If shot placement gets worse try 3mm back from start point. Continue until you find the "sweet spot". Find or create a reference point from which you can work. As shown in the picture below, mine is the rear screw of the front riser block.



{Fore hand hold position for my rifle}

The trigger hand:

All else being equal, this is the cause of most missed shots. I am right handed but lefties can easily adapt the text and pictures.

With the exception of custom stocks, all air rifle stocks are designed to fit the nonexistent "average person" thus some adaptation of hand position will probably be required. I have found that the thumb up position works well for most people.

Place a tab of masking tape inline with the centre of your rifle as a reference for your thumb.



{Thumb in centre}

Shoulder the rifle and place the three remaining finger tips on the pistol grip. Adjust the curl and position of the fingers until the knuckles are at about 15 degrees off the vertical. The index finger knuckle being the furthest forward. At this angle the tendons passing through the carpal tunnel will be relaxed. (Thank you Rudi). Place a strip of masking tape where your finger tips must rest.



{Finger tips on pistol grip}

With the rifle shouldered place your index finger on the trigger. The pad of the finger should be at 90 degrees to the rifle and flat on the trigger blade. If your finger does not reach move your thumb to the right enabling you to move your hand forward. If your finger is curling around the trigger move your thumb left to move your hand back.

Load your rifle and pointing in a safe direction take up the first stage of the trigger. Close your eyes and apply a little pressure to the trigger but not enough to release the shot. The pressure felt by your finger

should be even across the blade. Pressure on the right will push your shot left. Pressure on the left will pull your shot right.



{Thumb to the right}



{Thumb to the left}



{Trigger finger at 90 degrees}

Ideally your trigger finger should not be in contact with the stock. With the very light grip being described the recoil against your trigger finger can push the rifle to the left.



{Trigger finger off the stock}

Follow through is a vital part of springer shooting. After the shot is released keep dead still until the pellet strikes the target. Any movement will become a habit which will happen faster and faster until you are moving before the pellet has left the barrel.

Now that you have sent a few thousand pellets down the barrel to build muscle memory we get to natural aim.

The average lock time for a springer is six milliseconds; three for the piston to fly forward and three for the pellet to exit the barrel. Your body can relax in four milliseconds. It therefore makes sense to shoot from a totally relaxed position but how do we see if we are doing so.

Set up a target not further than your zero range. Go through your normal pre shot routine, close your eyes and release the shot and follow through. Open your eyes. Does the point of aim, point of impact and crosshair coincide? If yes you were on natural aim. Remember how it felt so that you can repeat it. If your POA, POI and cross hairs did not end up at the same position you were not on natural aim.

Reload and take aim. Close your eyes and using the muscle between your ears feel for any muscles under tension. Consciously relax those muscles without tensioning others. Open your eyes and see where your POA is now. Move and repeat until your point of aim is correct. Close your eyes and release the shot. You should be clover leafing at your point of aim; if not, focus on your trigger hand when pulling the trigger. The springer that does not enjoy a slow trigger pull has yet to be built.

Enjoy your shooting.

AdrianV

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