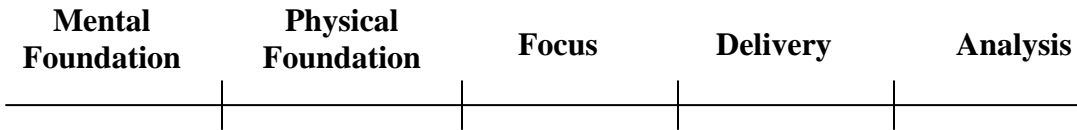


“The Shot”



Start of Shot....

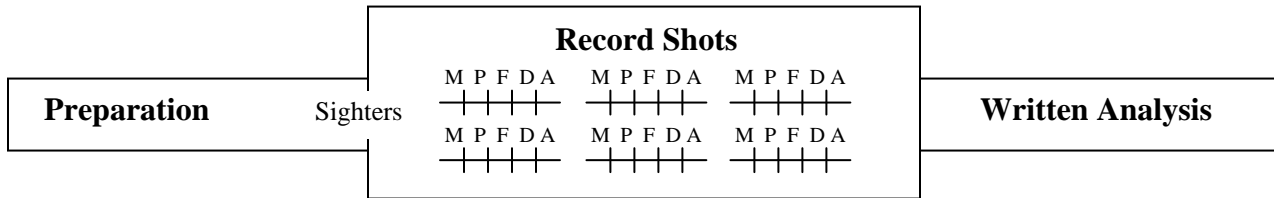
1. Establish Mental Foundation
 - a. stop, breathe to relax (Note that 1.a and 1.b make up the “Three Steps To Relax”.)
 - b. proper thoughts, positive self-talk
 - c. mentally rehearse shot
2. Establish Physical Foundation
 - a. set up position (outer position, look butt plate into shoulder, visual checks)
 - b. check balance (inner position)
 - c. check natural point of aim (relax specific points)
3. Establish Focus – No “checking” things
 - a. cue word
 - b. quiet mind – Present Moment
 - c. trigger preparation (This is the most critical element other than smooth trigger release.)
“Four Steps For Trigger Preparation”
 - All must take place before moment when both: a) on target and b) aiming.
 - 1) Mentally Ready – Focused on task – other thoughts already cleared.
 - 2) Emotionally Ready – Committed regardless of outcome – I’m ok.
 - 3) 1st Stage Taken Up – Once and for all – reject if trigger comes forward.
 - 4) Pressure on 2nd Stage – Be bold and decisive – no pulsing or flutter.
4. Delivery
 - a. on target, let it point, quiet body, quiet mind, quiet eye, Present Moment, just “Be”
 - b. smooth release – let “it” shoot
 - c. focus through – no physical, technical, mental, emotional change from on target
5. Analysis
 - a. of performance
 - b. of location on target
 - c. plan for next shot

End of Shot

Comments:

1. Emphasize the importance of the preparation.
2. Two possible outcomes of each Shot done right; both equally valid and correct:
 1. A hole in the paper
 2. Rejection part way through (Must start over at beginning: Step 1.a)The goal is to (a) recognize and (b) execute the correct outcome for each shot. On some shots, the right thing to do is put the gun down – this is not a “wasted” shot, but a shot done right. This approach helps develop the ability to confidently put the gun down when needed. Either outcome is done automatically. Both are successes.

“The Shooting Session” (Training, Match, or Final)



Structure of a Shooting Session

1. Preparation

- a. Physical preparation (warm-up, light stretching – an hour before)
- b. Equipment preparation (equipment set up)
- c. Mental Preparation
 - Set/review the goals/plan for the session
 - imagery/relaxation
- d. Position preparation (Range command: “Your Preparation Period Begins Now”)
 - build position (outer position)
 - sense and tune balance of position (inner position)
 - sense and tune natural point of aim – let it point where it wants to
 - optimize position, balance, and natural point of aim together
- e. Shot preparation
 - shot rehearsal: mental rehearsal, holding, dry-firing
 - beginning of sighters: settling in, sighting in, working on specific task (like trigger control)
- f. “Ready to Go”

2. Record Shots

- a. Last few sighters shot just like record shots, including rhythm, timing and following “The Shot” plan.
(This is critical and done after 1.f “Ready to Go”, sets the stage for record shots)
- b. Follow “The Shot” plan for each shot (or, in training, work on a part of it).

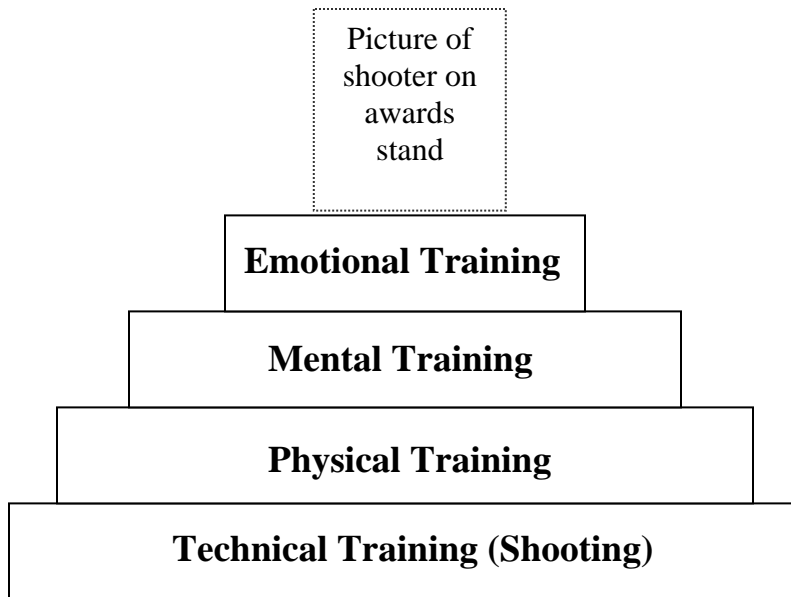
3. Written Analysis

- a. Observations on today’s shooting, goals met, goals not met, successes, breakdowns.
- b. Items to explore or work on in next training sessions.

Comments:

1. Emphasize preparation
2. Sighters act as transition from preparation (first few sighters to get settled and sighted in) to record shots (last few sighters should be just like record shots).
3. In Match, sighters begin after “Start” command but not until after the rest of the preparation has been completed – don’t have to start shooting immediately after “Start”

“Training – The Champion’s Steps to Success”



Training

1. Technical Training (Shooting) – develops:

- a. Technical proficiency (positions, trigger control, etc.)
- b. Tactical proficiency (developing techniques, following Shot plan)
- c. Match proficiency (performing well in matches)

Accomplished through:

- on-range shooting
- dry firing (can do at home)
- match experience
- equipment (proper adjustments)
- becoming student of the game (seek out resources, information, ideas)
- intensity training – training where outcome matters

2. Physical Training – develops:

- a. Stamina
- b. Strength
- c. Suppleness
- d. Sensitivity
- e. Stress Adaptation

Accomplished through:

- aerobic training
- strength training

- flexibility training/stretching
 - exercises and activities that emphasize balance, general coordination, hand-eye coordination, kinesthetic awareness, timing and rhythm
- (Note: also helps prevent injury)

3. Mental Training – develops:

- a. Attention Control (stay in the present, concentration & focus)
- b. Energy Management (handling pressure, arousal control, relaxing or psyching up)

Accomplished through

- relaxation
- imagery
- rehearsal
- cue words
- reading/hearing/studying sports psychology resources

4. Emotional Training – develops:

- a. Motivation (inspiration, commitment)
- b. Confidence (self-image, self-worth)
- c. Attitude (emotional maturity, acting like a Champion, faith & belief in yourself)
- d. Self-honesty, taking responsibility

Accomplished through:

- goal setting (outcome vs. task)
- self-talk
- having your life in order (the “do well in school” part...)
 - o family, friends, school, work, spiritual, social, relationships
- reading/hearing/studying sports psychology resources

5. General

- a. Time management
- b. Planning training (including rest, tapering)
- c. Training cycles, stress & recovery, phys/tech mix, breaks

Comments

1. Emphasize what each type of training can improve (related to shooting performance), then discuss specific training that addresses these areas
2. Discuss how training leads to success in matches (handling pressure, preventing “choking”, benefiting from bad days)

Permission is granted to distribute FREE copies for non-profit educational purposes provided the article is kept unedited in its entirety with all notices, copyright, and other information contained in the document. Any other use requires advance, specific, written permission from the author. The author may be contacted at jpoc@acm.org.

Based in the Atlanta, Ga., area, JP O'Connor (email: jpoc@acm.org and blog: <http://jpoconnor.wordpress.com/>) is involved in shooting as a competitor, official, and coach. He is a former Assistant National Coach – USA Paralympics Shooting Team and ISSF Judge, serves on the National Coach Development Staff in both rifle & pistol, and is Coach Emeritus of the NCAA rifle and intercollegiate pistol teams at the University of North Georgia. He enjoys working with a number of pistol and rifle athletes and junior club teams from around the country, ranging from beginners to the highly advanced, in training sessions, clinics, and one-on-one private coaching. Previous installments of this series, additional resources, and book suggestions may be found at <http://www.pilkguns.com/jparticles/jpcontents.htm> and via his blog at <http://jpoconnor.wordpress.com/>. Email questions and suggestions to jpoc@acm.org.

Links:

“High Performance Olympic Target Shooting” blog, books, and additional resources
<http://jpoconnor.wordpress.com/>

“On The Firing Line” article series and additional resources
<http://www.pilkguns.com/jparticles/jpcontents.htm>