

## RELEASING THE SHOT 10-2001

Now being retired from competition for almost two years, it is interesting to observe the changes in my skills and the effect on my precision shooting due to the lack of concentrated training. The first lesson to be relearned was that trying to use a "breaking glass" crisp trigger will result in some awful slow fire shots!

The problem with this kind of trigger is that you **MUST** be moving your trigger finger throughout the holding and aiming period! But, you cannot do this easily with a super-crisp 2nd stage setup on your trigger. Yet, I would guess that 90% of the "bullseye" shooters try to use this setup and also only begin applying the second stage or final release pressure **AFTER** they have recognized they are in the "best" part of their hold! This, ladies and gentlemen, is **TOO LATE**.

Today, we pretty much understand how the mind controls the body and agree that the sub-conscious aspect of the mind is the controller of all the elements in delivering an aimed shot. The only conscious act by the shooter should be the on-going effort to maintain the best alignment of the sights he can while all else is being coordinated by the sub-conscious.

It is also my belief that once the sub-conscious has been correctly programmed (by careful training on each element in the shot delivery process) that it will integrate the observed movement of the gun **AND** the movement of the trigger finger as it adds pressure to the trigger and moves to the rear to give you the result you want. However, that finger **HAS** to be moving! Otherwise there is no pressure/movement curve to integrate with the gun movement. Instead, there is a convulsive movement sometime during the hold - probably due to a conscious effort by the shooter. Not good.

The better method that will greatly benefit your performance is to first optimize the mechanical part of the equation by giving the 2nd stage of the trigger setup a bit of "roll" or movement before release - instead of a 'super crisp break'. This bit of movement is what is needed by the subconscious so it can "time" the rate of release to coincide with the sight-aligned gun's movement into the 'sweet-spot' that results in a 10.

Next, you need to analyze the movement pattern that you have **TODAY**. Maybe, for many reasons, you aren't as steady as a week ago or even yesterday. This is **NOT** important - really! What is important is to recognize the current pattern: How far into the hold cycle is the **ONSET** of your steadiest hold? How long does this period last? (This is also not very important, because you should never get to the end of this short "steadiest" period or even to the middle of it!)

Then, by dry-firing, you find the **RATE** at which you must apply pressure to the trigger so that the sear (2nd stage) releases **JUST AS YOU BEGIN THAT STEADIEST PROTION OF YOUR HOLD**. Now at first this is a bit scary: "What if it goes off early?" Well, what if it does? Actually, you will probably get no worse than a 9 and you have about a 50/50 chance of a 10! The release will be clean and your hold is probably better than you think, anyway. For the next shot just use a slightly slower rate. The really bad thing is to not have the rate fast enough and you end up near (or past) the end of the steadiest period before the shot releases. Now you **WILL** have some bad shots!

When you have the rhythm for this shooting session down, the benefits are enormous: First, you expend far less energy and use up far less oxygen. This means you do not fatigue prematurely and have reserves all the way to the end of the match. Secondly, your confidence goes up greatly as the shots break effortlessly and you begin to see the phenomenon of : "It broke just as it was heading for the sweet spot". You will **NOT** see those awful "aws---" shots and you'll start wondering why this used to seem so hard!

So, the lesson is: Start the pressure on the second stage as you settle into the aiming area and keep increasing it at a rate that allows the shot to break **JUST AS YOU ENTER THE STEADIEST PART OF YOUR HOLD**. Note we have insisted on using "steadiest" not "steady". No one is completely steady, nor is it necessary to be! The shot just has to release as the gun enters the area that will result in a 10. Soon, you will realize that your subconscious is sort of 'steering' the gun with the trigger pressure into that area. And never forget - **YOU** (consciously) cannot do this! Just let your subconscious do it and enjoy!

Don