

LESSON 4: THE FIRST TARGET POSITION - STANDING

PURPOSE

This lesson introduces you to the first target position, which is the standing position.



*dry fire
sight alignment
standing position
target
trigger release*

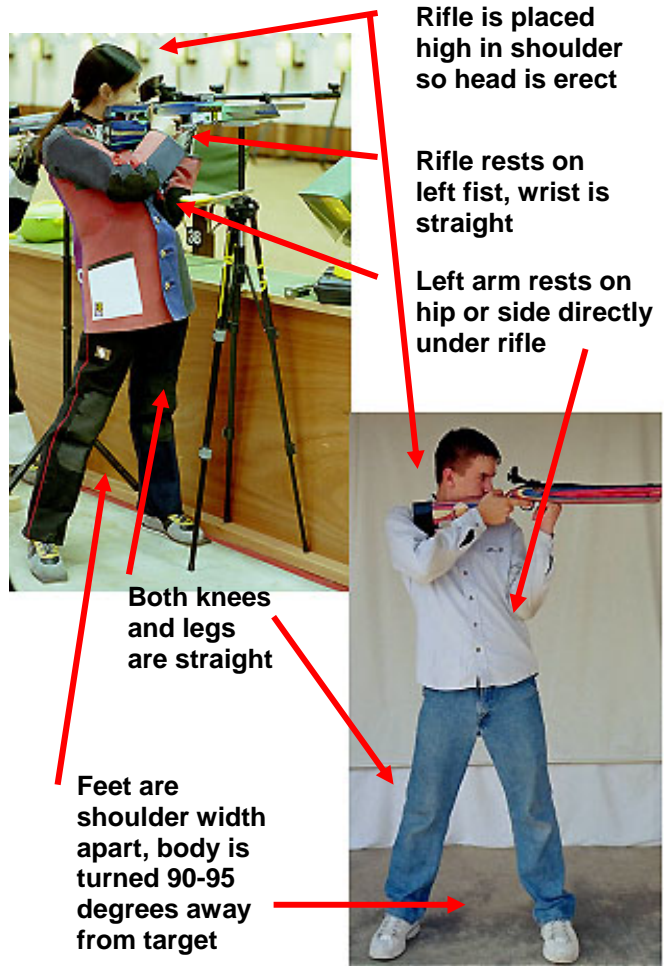
INTRODUCTION

Target rifle shooting involves firing in three different shooting positions, standing, kneeling and prone. These shooting positions originated with firing positions that once were taught to warriors and soldiers and were used in battle or hunting. Today, these traditional firing positions have evolved into specific shooting positions that are part of target shooting and are defined by competition rules recognized throughout the world.

The first shooting position normally taught in the JROTC rifle marksmanship is the **standing position**. The photos here show both a champion shooter and a high school shooter firing in the standing position. The champion shooter was a competitor in the 2000 Olympic Games and won a bronze medal in the women's air rifle event. She is firing a precision air rifle and wearing special clothing that is used in advanced target shooting. The other shooter is firing a sporter air rifle and

wearing the type of clothes that are used in school-age sporter class competitions.

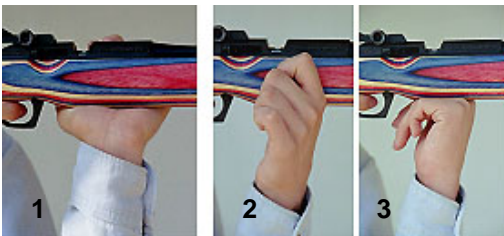
***Special Note.** The shooting position illustrations and descriptions in this Student Text are given for right-handed shooters. If you are a left-handed shooter, simply reverse the descriptions or visualize holding the rifle with hands opposite those that are shown.*



Notice how similar the two standing positions are. Visualize yourself in this same stance as you hold an air rifle while aiming at a target. Study the two photos carefully. The arrows point to specific things you should try to copy when you shoot in the standing position.

The most important points about the **standing position** that you should try to duplicate in your standing position are:

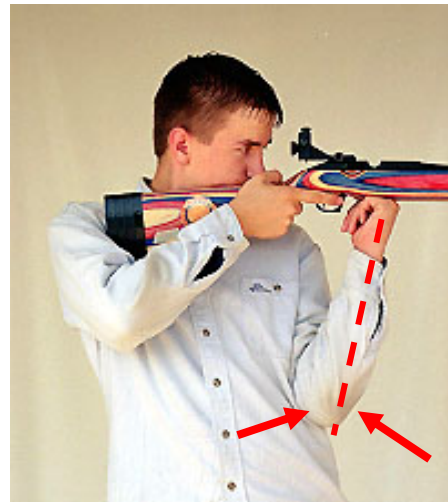
1. The feet and body are turned so that the body faces at least 90 degrees away from the target and the left side is pointed towards the target.
2. The feet are shoulder width apart.
3. Both legs and knees are straight. However, the muscles in the legs must be relaxed, not tense.
4. The left arm must rest on the left side, directly under the rifle. The elbow can rest on the hip, or the arm can rest on the side, but it must always be directly under the rifle.
5. The rifle rests on the left hand. Most shooters make a fist with their hand and rest the rifle on the fist. There are different support hand positions that are correct for different individuals.
6. The rifle should be placed fairly high in the shoulder so that the head can be kept nearly erect. Choosing the correct support hand position makes this possible.



Illustrations 1-5 show different support hand positions for standing, from the lowest (open hand #1) to the highest on the (thumb and split fingers #5). Note that the wrist is bent only in the open hand position. The wrist must be held straight in all other hand positions.

The

correct support hand position for you is the one that raises the rifle up to the level of your eye and the target. You should not simply copy the left hand position of another shooter. The relative lengths of your arms and torso determine the correct hand position variation for you. The illustrations here show different support hand variations for standing. These include the lowest hand position, for shooters with proportionately long arms or short torsos, as well as the highest hand position, which is best for shooters with long torsos and shorter arms. Select a support hand position for you that will raise the rifle so it is fairly high in the shoulder and your head is nearly erect.



One of the most critical points in building a correct standing position is to place the left (support) arm on the side of the body, directly under the rifle. When this arm is relaxed on the side of the body, the forearm serves as a steady brace to support the rifle. In shooting, bone support is much steadier than muscle support.

The standing position is the first shooting position that is taught because it is both the easiest shooting position to learn and the most challenging to master. The position is especially challenging because it has a smaller base of support and the body is higher. It is normally not as stable as the lower prone and kneeling positions where a sling can also be used to help stabilize the rifle. Slings may not be used in standing. Most shooters find that it takes more practice to develop the ability to hold the rifle still in standing.

Notwithstanding the challenges of developing a stable standing position, the position can produce amazing scores. The current women's world record for air rifle standing on the official competition target (the ten ring is a 0.5 mm dot that is about the size of the period at the end of this sentence) is a perfect 400 out of 400 possible points. The men's world record is 600 out of 600 points.

SHOULD I SHOOT RIGHT- OR LEFT-HANDED?

Before you begin to shoot in any shooting position, you must decide whether you will shoot from your right or left shoulder and aim with your right or left eye. The best way to determine whether to shoot right-handed or left-handed is to determine which eye is your dominant or master eye. Someone whose right eye is dominant should shoot from the right shoulder. Someone whose left eye is dominant should shoot from the left shoulder.

A simple dominant eye test should be performed to determine which eye is dominant. Cut a one-half inch hole in a 3"x5" card. Hold the card at arm's length. With both eyes open, look through the hole at a distinct object. Then bring the card back to your eyes while continuing to look at the object. If you continue to look at the object with both eyes

open, the hole in the card will end up in front of your dominant eye.



Dominant eye test--Step 1



Dominant eye test--Step 2

There are also many people who are cross dominant. That is, they are right-handed and left-eye dominant or vice versa. There is some research that indicates cross dominant individuals may advance further in target shooting if they shoot from the same shoulder as their dominant eye, but the research is not conclusive.

For cross dominant persons who simply are not comfortable shooting from the same shoulder as their dominant eye, shooting from the other shoulder is acceptable. However, if this is done, it is very important to place a blinder on the rear sight to block the view of the dominant eye so that the eye that is used for aiming can concentrate on the rifle sights.

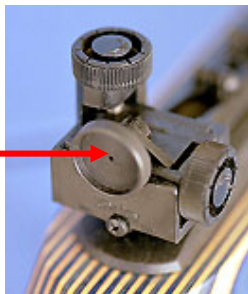
AIMING- SIGHT ALIGNMENT

When learning to hold the rifle correctly in the standing position, the first practice exercises you will do involve aiming, holding and dry firing at blank targets. To do that, you need to know how to align the sights and smoothly press the trigger.

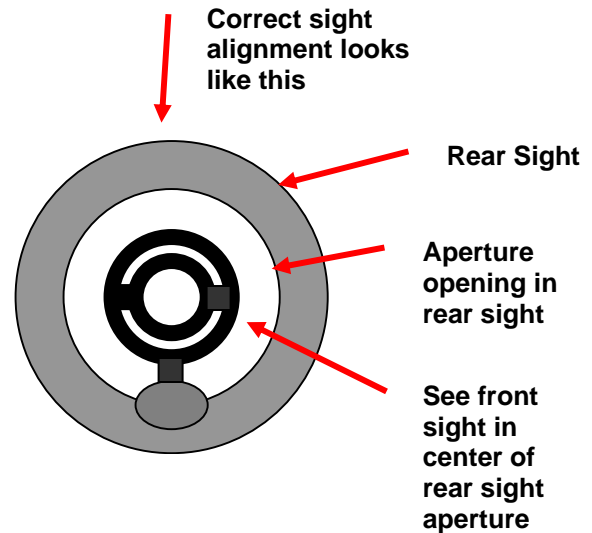
Sight alignment simply means to look through the rear sight iris to see the front sight and then to align it so that the front sight appears in the middle of the rear sight opening. When you place the rifle in your shoulder to hold it in the standing position, place your head on the cheek piece so that the eye you use to aim looks through the small hole in the rear sight. As you look through this hole, you should automatically see the front sight. To achieve proper sight alignment, simply move the front sight so that it appears in the center of the rear sight.



A rear sight blinder can be made from a piece of translucent plastic. Cut a hole in one end so that the blinder will fit over the detached rear sight iris



To align the sights, look through the small hole in the rear sight iris to see the front sight



PULLING THE TRIGGER

To **dry fire** while aiming at a blank target, it is necessary to first cock the trigger mechanism without charging the gas cylinder or loading a pellet in the breech. After the cocked rifle is placed in the shooting position, the shooter looks through the rear sight to properly align the front and rear sights, points the aligned sights at the center of the target and then completes the dry fire shot by smoothly pressing the trigger.

Some important points to master in correctly pulling the trigger are shown in the following illustrations.



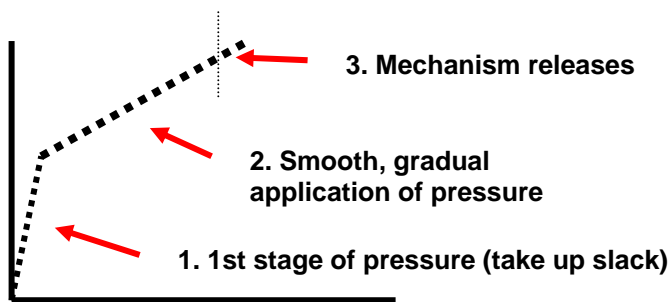
When you place the rifle in position, always keep the index finger outside of the trigger guard.



Align the sights on the target and then place the index finger on the trigger.



Take up the slack (first-stage) on the trigger and then, with the sights aligned on the target, smoothly press the trigger to the rear until the mechanism releases.



The graph shows how pressure is applied to the trigger. The time from the first application of pressure until the mechanism, releases should last about 4-8 seconds.

LEARNING THE STANDING POSITION

Now, with a knowledge of what a proper standing position looks like, how to determine whether you should shoot right or left handed, how to select the proper support arm position, how to align the sights and how to release the trigger, you are ready to try the standing position yourself. Learning the standing position is easier if it is done in a sequence that follows these steps:

- 1. Study the position.** Take one more look at the standing position photos. Study those model standing positions and visualize how you will place your body in the same position.
- 2. Get into position without the rifle.** Take your position on the firing point and get into a standing position without the rifle. By doing this first without the rifle, it will make it easier to get your feet in the correct position and place your support arm on the side of the body correctly. Key position checkpoints are marked with arrows on the photo. Stand with your feet turned 90 degrees away from the target. Place your feet about shoulder width apart. Keep your body relaxed, but erect and look toward the target with your head. Fold the left arm and rest it on your left side. Lift your right hand and imagine holding the rifle with it as the rifle rests on your left hand.

This is a good place to check your left hand position. The place where the rifle will rest should be at the same level as your chin (see dashed line on photo). If that support point is higher or lower, you should check lower or higher hand positions.

3. **Get into position with the rifle.** The next step is to pick up the rifle and get into the same position with the rifle. When you add the rifle to the position, begin by placing the rifle fairly high in your shoulder. The placement of the rifle butt plate in the shoulder is correct if the head is erect. If the head is bent down, the rifle is too low in the shoulder. Check the support arm position to be sure it rests on your side. A good way to check this is to be sure your arm is completely relaxed and that no muscles in the arm are used to hold up the rifle. Finally, check your left hand position. If the rifle is pointing below the target, try a higher hand position. If the rifle is pointing above the target, try a lower hand position.

CONCLUSION

This lesson details the correct way to achieve the standing position. Remember, all photos used in this lesson are for right-handed shooters, so if you are a left-handed, reverse the descriptions. When learning the standing position it is important to learn in steps. Study a model position first, then try the position without the rifle. Next try the position with the rifle and finally do holding and dry fire exercises on a blank target before advancing to a bull's eye target.

Support point for rifle is at chin level

Arm rests on side



Feet turned 90 degrees, placed shoulder width apart.

Buttplate is placed high to keep head erect

Left hand position raises rifle to level of target



Arm rests on side directly under rifle