



# Training and Shooting

## Technical - All Disciplines

### Introducing The Shooting Diary

The shooting diary is regarded as one of the most important and most often neglected pieces of equipment that a shooter can possess. Used properly, it can help shooters solve problems and progress rapidly. If you are serious about your shooting, you should be filling out your diary every time you go out, and then reviewing it regularly.

### What's in the Diary?

The diary is not merely a score book, so it contains more than just what you shot. Knowing that you shot 95% last Tuesday doesn't help you shoot that score or better on Friday. You need details on what you did, where you were, how you felt, what new equipment was used, etc. Successful shooting is in the details: you need to capture them, so you can duplicate them.

### Statements of Fact

The first things that we capture are the details of what happened. Try to be as exact and objective as possible. For subjective matters (i.e. how well did you concentrate), try to attach an objective value from 0 to 10. We need to describe everything relevant about the experience, so we can learn from it.

- **What, Where and When:** What event was shot (air pistol, running target, double trap, etc.)? What was the range (name and location) and environment (hot and humid, poor lighting, heavy winds, noise level, etc.)? When you performed (date and start time) and how much sleep did you have (an extremely important factor in shooting which I must personally monitor.) You'll appreciate showing up at a match with a warm jacket, forewarned by your diary that it is a cold, drafty range.
- **Why:** Is this a session for training, practising or competing? Additionally, what are your goals for the session? If you don't have a goal, then why are you there? The session objective is very important, as it guides your activities and focuses your effort. During your last session, you may have identified an opportunity for improvement (this is a positive way of saying you had a problem.) As such, you should have developed a solution. This session's objective may be to implement and test that solution.
- **How:** How did you feel? What was your attitude before and after the session? Were you prepared? What was your level of arousal (energy, interest, excitement, etc.) How well were you concentrating? Was it easy to shoot or did you have to work at it? How well did you perform Physically, Technically, Mentally and in general, Overall? (On the sample page, I've used a scale of 0 - 10, with 0 meaning low or poor, and 10 being high or excellent. Its just a quick way to capture subjective information, without getting bogged down.)

You can also capture some technical details here as well, such as group size (with or without flyers) in millimetres or inches, scores (by group, target or course of fire) and actual shot placement (draw the group patterns.)

### Situational Analysis

Okay, you've shot and captured the data. So now what? If you stop at writing down the day's events, you're not intellectually involved. To make this exercise worthwhile, you need to look at what occurred and how it will direct your future. When you identify an area for improvement (stay positive), you want to find a solution. Similarly, when you perform well, you want to identify, reinforce and duplicate the actions which brought you success.

The only way this can take place is by analysing what you did (everything that you jotted down or felt) and determining the cause or effect of those issues. For instance, you may notice that you had some flyers. Thinking about this, you remember that you were overholding. Similarly, you see that you set a new personal best for consecutive 10s, and you believe that this was caused by exceptionally smooth trigger pull. The key is to determine why things happened in your session today. Let's look at the different types of analysis that we need.

- **Solution Analysis:** a statement of issue. You determine what needs work and then figure out what can be done. You could phrase the issue like this: "I am looking for a solution for trigger snatching." (*Do not make a statement like "My trigger is awful!" This is a self-defeating statement which reinforces poor trigger work and raises your level of anxiety.*) You may know how to solve the issue yourself (i.e. dry-firing, working on a smooth pull, etc.) As such, write down how to fix the matter. If you don't have the answer, then you may choose the **One-Person Solution** which goes as follows: "The one person who can help me with trigger snatching is \_\_\_\_\_." At this point, you talk to that person and that person alone about the problem. It reduces the impact of the negative reinforcement (you talk about it once, and not 20 times to everyone who will listen) and offers you a concrete resolution plan, reducing worry.
- **Success Analysis:** review of what went well today. "What did I do well today" reinforces positive experience, imprints individual and builds better self-image.

### **Where Do You Want to Go Tomorrow?**

We're almost done. You have the facts and analysis. Now all we need to do is to develop goals for our next session, based upon what we learned today. These goals set up your next shooting session and intelligently direct your work. Based on your Solution and Success Analysis, it will be apparent what you need to do. Act on that analysis.

Additionally, take a look at your annual plan. What period (Preparation, Competition and Transition ) and phase are you in or entering? What are the goals associated with them and how are you supporting them? Plan the work and then work the plan.

### **Sample Page:**

- [Shooting Diary](#) *Here's a shooting diary sample page. Feel free to print it, double sided on 8.5" x 11" page. Once you fold it, it fits nicely into a 5.5" x 8.5" organizer binder.*

### **Final Words of Advice on Your Diary:**

- Read it before you go to the range, so you are prepared.
- Read your diary whenever something is troubling you. If you've been shooting for awhile, odds are you've encountered and solved the issue before. Let's hope you had the foresight to write it down!
- Write down everything that you believe is relevant, as soon as you can. Don't wait several hours or days because your memories and perceptions fade over time. You may also forget entirely.
- Write entries in your diary regularly, preferably everytime you train, practise and compete.
- Bring it whenever you shoot and don't leave it behind. Your shooting diary is your past, present and future. As such, it is extremely valuable!

**Remember: If you are not keeping track of your performance and thoughts, then you are liable to repeat non-peak performance.**