



In some of the Gallery Rifle disciplines such as the 1500, Timed & Precision 2 and Phoenix A matches you are required to shoot from both the kneeling and sitting positions, so here a few tips to help you achieve a stable platform to shoot from. Probably the most common mistake made by novice GR shooters when shooting from the kneeling or sitting position is tilting or dropping the head down too low in relation to the scope, which will often result in a different point of impact on the target causing you to lose valuable points in the process! Whichever position you have to shoot from, the most important point to remember is to keep your head as upright as possible and align your head up squarely with the scope so that you attain the same contact/reference point on the stock with your cheek as you do when shooting in the standing position. If this is done consistently then the point of impact on the target should remain consistent regardless of which position you release the shots from.

Starting with the kneeling position (1) for a right handed shooter, kneel down on your right knee and sit back on the heel to take the weight of your body. The left foot should be planted firmly on the floor and the lower part of the leg should be kept upright at around 90°. Placing the back of the arm just above the elbow on the front edge of the knee should then provide you with a good flat contact area to help hold the rifle in a good position. The right elbow is dropped down into a relaxed position so that the muscles are



not under any undue tension. Depending on your physical stature and the profile of your stock, some shooters may find that the rifle ends up being held in a position that is too low to allow you to naturally acquire a proper head/sight alignment in the kneeling position. I have this problem with my Marlins and a simple fix is to add a small block of some description to the rear of the fore end which will help elevate the rifle so that a good head/sight position can be achieved. The fore end then simply rests in the palm of the left hand applying just enough pressure to hold the butt pad



into the shoulder. When practicing shooting in the kneeling position, make sure that the position you adopt aligns your body up naturally onto the target without you having to twist or tension any muscles in order to hold it there. Also experiment by placing your right knee (2) at various angles in relation to your body to find which gives you the most stable position, as it will vary from person to person. Some of you may find the kneeling position a bit uncomfortable to start with so make sure that you only hold this position for a maximum of 20 – 30 seconds at a time when practicing before standing up to allow the blood to circulate properly again. This is also around the time it should take you to fire off 6 well aimed shots during a competition! Placing the foot too far in front of the knee (3) can cause you to push your body weight backwards causing instability and discomfort. At the same time,



having your foot tucked in under your knee (4) will push your weight forward causing instability and produce a tendency to pull the front of the rifle downwards. If you find it impossible to place your elbow in front of your knee cap then you should try and place the lower part of your fore arm just in front of the knee joint. Placing the tip of your elbow directly on top of your knee will produce a narrow very narrow pivot point making it virtually impossible for you to hold the rifle steady. Due to either a physical problem or an injury, there have been a few occasions over the years when some shooters have found it easier or slightly more comfortable to shoot with both knees on the ground (5) and sitting back on their heels. This position is very similar to a normal offhand position as the body angle in relation to the target is pretty much the same, the knees are also placed around shoulder width apart and the body and head are kept in an upright position. A good friend of mine and his better half use another kneeling position (6) when they shoot the 1500 match. It requires good flexibility and the right physical size to adopt this



it! In this position, the left forearm should wrap around the top of the left knee then keeping the left leg upright, the rifle simply sits in the v shape created by the bend in the arm. The left hand gently rests on the right fore arm and the right elbow is pulled inwards towards the side of the body slightly. The right foot is turned inwards and the shooter sits down on top of it, making sure that no other part of the body makes contact with the floor otherwise penalty points will be incurred! This position is only recommended for use with a rimfire semi auto rifle and is unsuitable for underlever rifles due to the racking action needed to operate them.



The sitting position offers a wider variety of choice to the shooter and your physical size and flexibility will usually determine the most stable position that you can adopt, although some positions will only suit the smaller semi auto rifles. Once again, keeping the head in an upright position will help you retain a consistent point of impact on the target and another important point to note is that when your feet make contact with the ground they should

do so with either the sides or soles flat on the ground. Placing just the heels on the ground will act as a pivot point and cause the ankles to rotate slightly causing positional instability. When shooting an underlever, I find that this position (7) allows me to rack the lever smoothly and quickly and still keep my sight focussed on the centre of the target. The right leg is extended outwards over the top of the left foot to help act as a brace, and the right foot is turned over so that the flat edge provides a stable contact area



on the ground. The left foot is flat on the ground and the left knee is raised so that the fore end can rest on top of it. The left hand is cupped with the lower two fingers gripping the knee and the others supporting the fore end. Leaning backwards allows a good head/scope alignment and the right elbow drops down naturally and is under no tension. It is important when in the sitting position to make sure that as many limbs as possible are anchored against another to ensure maximum stability is achieved. Another position to try is with the legs crossed over with the sides of the feet flat against the floor. Then, lifting the knees slightly to bring the rifle up to the correct height, the elbows can either rest either just outside (8) or on the inside of the knees (9) so that everything locks up together. This will also produce a very stable hold to shoot an underlever from.



The most accurate sitting position I have found when shooting with a rimfire rifle (10) is to lift my knees up higher so that I can wrap my left forearm around my left knee. I then rest the rifle between the 'v' shape that this creates and lightly rest my left hand on top of my right forearm. This ensures that everything is locked together and should guarantee you all 10's or X's at 50m, with a bit of practice of course! Another variation (11) which also gives excellent results is similar to picture no.7 except shooting with a 10/22 allows you to brace your forearm against the knee giving a more stable platform.

It is always worth spending quite a bit of time practicing all of the positions that we shoot from in Gallery Rifle competitions no matter what standard you shoot at, as we can all improve in certain areas. When I practice for the 1500 match I use 4 separate target centres at 50m and shoot 6 rounds kneeling on the top left, 6 sitting top right, 6 weak shoulder bottom left then 6 from the strong shoulder on the bottom right. This way there is no doubt about any shots you think you may have pulled from a certain position as the results will be there in front of you. It will also highlight any variations you may be having in points of impact on the target from certain positions. This way you can either work on better a head/scope alignment in that position or visually see any corrections you may need to give if you need to aim off slightly in the future. In the next issue I'll cover the basics behind loading and reloading drills along with ammunition carrying and placement for competition.