

New Zealand Pistol Association Inc.

N.R.A.

Action Pistol Shooting

Coaching Notes

Prepared By:

Graeme Purves
National Coach

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Introduction.

This set of notes is designed to assist those who wish to improve their performance in the sport of Pistol Shooting.

To those who believe that all you need is to be able to shoot to make it to the top level in the shooting sports, then read no further, the information contained in this booklet will be of little use to you, as it does not teach you how to shoot; Hell you already know how to do that..... so that then leaves the question of can you perform on demand and in any conditions?.....If not then read on!

These notes do not cover the special technical skills required for any particular shooting discipline either, but briefly cover the skills that are required to be learnt to compete and perform at the highest levels in what is a very demanding sport mentally! These skills are not specific to shooting as they are used by many of the worlds top sports people to assist them in achieving their potential, and once at the top in helping to maintain their consistency in performance.

The idea's and information contained in these notes are from many sources and have been identified as enhancing the performance of athletes involved in the shooting disciplines. Some are based on the experiences of the past six years;.....I believe it's called learning from your mistakes! Others are used by top competitors who compete successfully at the World Championship and Olympic level's in sports that require similar attributes to those required by the shooting disciplines.

Deciding Your Commitment

Deciding your commitment to your sport is possibly the most important 'Sports decision' you will make!

If all you want out of your sport is a bit of relaxed fun, then your approach should be entirely different from someone who wants to reach the top. It is important to realise that excellence demands complete dedication: If you want to be a top shooting competitor, then training to be a top shooting competitor must be the most important thing in your life. If your career or family are more important than your sport, then you will find it difficult to devote the time and dedication you need to achieve excellence in this sport, unless you have a "very" sympathetic boss or family.

Once you have decided how committed you are, adjust your training and expectations appropriately.

Those who's ideas and input have either directly or indirectly helped to formulate the "Philosophy" and "Direction" these notes contain;

Include:-

Psychologists: Rainier Martens, Terry Orlick, Alistair Stronach, John Syer, Chistopher Connolly, John Murray, Karlene Sugarman and Joanne Taylor.

Coaches: Paul McCormack, Lazslo Hammill, Bill Parcels, John Monie and Ron Cheatley.

Others: Iain Ansell, past and present members of the Pistol Assn's National Training Squads.

Graeme Purves

1. Impossible!

Are "wishes" impossible?

Granted there are certain things that are impossible; such as "being in two places at one time" and "bringing back the dead" These are called "givens" as for these to occur it would violate the laws of physics! But beyond the givens the plain sobering truth is we cannot say what is impossible!

We have tried many times in the past and failed.

The four minute mile is a good example, up until the 1950's scientists and physiologists believed that it was physically impossible for a human being to run a four minute mile, until somebody did! Then within a few more years over 50 people had achieved it!

Another good example is the math student who fell asleep in class one Friday afternoon while his teacher was giving out the homework assignment. When the boy awoke, he saw two problems on the blackboard, scribbled them down, and worked on them diligently for much of the weekend. To his dismay he could solve only one of the problems.

His teacher was amazed when he handed in his homework on the Monday, as the problems on the blackboard were not meant to be homework but examples of two unsolvable problems of mathematics. The student not knowing they were impossible to solve, went ahead and solved one of them!

To say what is impossible is to predict the future, and in the form of pure fact we do not usually have enough information to hand to predict the future or how someone will perform in the future! All that we can truly know is what we are willing to attempt!

Don't waste your time trying to decide whether or not something is possible! Instead use your time to decide whether its worth the effort, and whether you're willing to pay the price.....

"If you are, then anything.....that's right.....anything is possible!"

2. The Shooting Diary - Why use one!

"Failing to plan..... is planning to fail"

Introduction.

The key to long term success in any endeavour is the consistent achievement of high performance

- ⇒ Consistency of performance is re-peatability.
- ⇒ Re-peatability lies in knowing what it is that you did in the first place.
- ⇒ Knowing what you did depends on keeping a record of it.
- ⇒ Keeping a record means putting it in writing.
- ⇒ Making this record work for you depends on your analysis of it.
- ⇒ Analysis depends on you identifying what works for you and what doesn't.

"Results! Why, man, I have gotten a lot of results.

I know several thousand things that wont work."

Thomas Edison

The Role of the Diary in Improving Shooting Performance.

- ◆ A diary is the key to the shooter and/or their Coach analysing performance accurately.
- ◆ Being able to analyse performance accurately moves the shooter from "experience" to knowledge.
- ◆ Knowledge allows the shooter to learn from their experience.
- ◆ Learning is part of a "cycle of performance improvement" rather than an isolated activity.

Using your diary.

The parts of the above process that you will work on most actively are the need to record what it is that you do and the analysis of these activities. The recording of your activities needs to include numbers and words. A diary with only numbers is a log.

Using your diary.....Cont.

You are required to develop the habit of making notes before and after each training / practice session and match.

NRA Action Pistol Training Scoresheets completed during each of your training sessions, in conjunction with entries in your shooting diary should cover the following:

- Your plan for the activity.
- Goals for the activity.
- Key words / thoughts / reminders you used.
- Results and outcomes.
- Attitudes.
- Emotions.
- Physical feelings.
- Anything else you feel is important or relevant to your performance.

Your Shooting Diary and the NRA training Scoresheets, which cover the period from the last training activity to the present one, should be brought with you to each training activity, this will allow you and your coach to monitor your progress and work through any concerns this information raises.

This information also forms the first part of the process of how to plan for success at your next competition. It allows you to evaluate and analyse your performances and identify what is working and what is not, what has to be changed and what is required to be retained.

This evaluation is then the basis for the preview you are required to carry out before each competition and used in the construction of a plan for that match. This means you will be better prepared for your next competition and able to achieve success in it.

This match plan once formulated and proven successful, should not change without a “**very**” good reason to do so.

3. Motivation & Goal Setting

Motivation.

How is motivation achieved?

It is achieved through:- **INSPIRATION**..... combined with **IMAGINATION** which provides the **MOTIVATION**.....to undertake a course of **ACTION** which results in **SATISFACTION**.....!

Through this success you are then motivated to seek further satisfaction, this is the first step of many in helping you to develop "a positive attitude" and "a winning way".

John Monie when interviewed on taking up the coaching position with the Warriors, was asked what did he look for, when seeking players to join his team? His response was; "a positive attitude; and hopefully they might also have a little bit of talent, but attitude is everything".

Some of our competitive pistol shooters have poor attitudes, most have been shooting for several years, and put their mixed form down to a variety of reasons. They mainly operate in a negative environment, which does nothing to promote positive responses, or attitudes.

Your attitude determines the way you respond, therefore your attitude going into, and throughout an event will control the outcome.

Motivation is clearly an important component of performance in sport and without it we are never ready to compete. Its impact is fundamental, as a complete absence of motivation would mean inertia - no activity at all.

There are three dimensions to motivation.

SELECTIVITY The tendency to pursue one particular activity in preference to any other; How single minded we are in pursuing the goal immediately in front of us.

PERSISTENCE The tendency to continue an activity until a particular aim is fulfilled or;

How long we are prepared to stick at pursuing a goal to ensure we achieve it.

INTENSITY The amount of energy devoted to the activity; How hard will we work to achieve our goal?

Goal Setting.....What is it?

It's another tool, just like your pistol and other equipment are tools required by you in your quest to achieve your desired results and outcomes in this sport.

A trades-person in any trade, if they have the right tools at their disposal and are well trained in their use, will be able to complete a job of work to a standard exceeding the expectations of both themselves and the customer.

You as a sportsperson require the right tools and the training in how to use them correctly, just like any competent trades-person, to allow you to compete to your potential.

So the use of goalsetting needs to be learnt and put into practice, just like the other technical skills that are required to be successful in this sport.

Developing a Goalsetting Programme.

1. *Decide exactly what it is you want to achieve.*
This/these will be your long term goal/s and may be a mixture of process(how) and outcome(what) goals.
2. *Identify the barriers that are preventing your progress towards these long term goals.* These barriers may be physical, technical, financial, psychological etc.
3. *Decide what is necessary to clear the barriers.*
These are the skills you need to acquire, help or resources you need, habits you need to develop or lose etc.
4. *Establish the specific goals to assist you in tackling the barriers one by one.*
These will become your medium & short term and daily goals.
These will be almost exclusively process(How) goals.

In a few words:

"If you don't know where you are going.....

.....Then how in the hell how can you expect to get there?"

The goals you set should be:

Written: Goals are dreams, writing them down as goals moves them towards reality, as it then makes them dreams with deadlines.

Present Tense: Write your goals in the present tense, as if they have already happened; ie: "I have made the team", "I have fired 192 shots maintaining full focus" rather than : "I want" or "I will". The expectancy of achieving a goal is one of the most important elements in actually achieving it.

Specific: Set goals that are as specific as you can get them, specify what the goal is and how you will measure it. A goal should be written in terms of a single quality, characteristic or skill. These should be behaviours or outcomes that only you have control over.

Challenging: Your goals should stay within the realms of possibility, wish lists were the normal fare for the previous training squad, which resulted in very few of these squad members receiving the satisfaction to be obtained from achieving goals.

Attainable: If the goals you chose are not attainable, the most likely outcome is you will lose motivation. The goals you set should relate to where you are now and you should aim to improve in small steps. Your best practice scores are not realistic for competition goals, they are wish lists. Refer back to your last few competition results, average these and use the result as your goals for the next competition, add one or two points if you feel you have considerably improved since the last competition to make it challenging. If you do not attain your goals revise them downward slightly for the next competition. Remember that, in responding to unmet goals, self-damnation serves no useful purpose.

Measurable: You will get a better sense of achievement, and your motivation will become stronger, when you can actually see your progress. Your goals should be measurable, ideally by an objective method, but if not then on a scale of 1.-10, or expressed as a percentage. Use facts(statistics) to measure your progress where you can.

Multiple: Set your self several goals as the chances are greater of gaining achievement, providing you have set realistic goals, the goals you do reach will provide motivation. Unmet goals can be carried forward to be worked on again next time, after carefully checking that they are attainable.

Dynamic: Goals should be dynamic and visible at all times. Use your diary to reinforce this revisiting them about each week to check on what is required to be changed or paid extra attention to as goals are either met or missed.

Prioritised: If you have several goals in the daily, short term, or medium term, use a simple A,B,C,D system to indicate which have priority, and therefore first call on your available time and energy.

Personal: They must be **your goals, personal** and **specific** to you, your motivation will be enhanced if you decide what you want to achieve. Avoid falling into the trap of making the reaching of your goals dependant on the actions of others;

“ If they don’t share your enthusiasm for working towards your goals then you will end up in fairly deep.....evil smelling.....sticky stuff!”

4. Self-Confidence

This is controlled by - Perspective & Anxiety.

The key for you to be able to realise your potential in Action Pistol Shooting lies in your hands; This is, the ability to keep events in perspective and maintain a positive outlook. Useful tools to assist you in reducing anxiety are:-

Setting realistic goals; focusing on doing the things well that will help you meet the challenges - that means cementing in your routines folks!!!, and realising that you will still be a worthwhile person no matter what the outcome is.

*“You can’t improve without setting the highest standards;
But you also need to measure achievement against your real
potential at a given time.”*

*“It’s easy to get diverted by all the variables outside your
control, to let them eat away at your vision and self-
confidence.*

*But detours will doom you; you’ll lose faith in yourself; and
you will fulfil your own worst prophesy.”*

*“No one loves to win more than I do; That thrill of victory
still pushes me, still rewards me, I’ve yet to find anything to
replace it. I’ve also come to discover that winning isn’t
everything, nor is it the only thing, as no matter how hard
they try no one wins all the time! ”*

Bill Parcells - Finding a way to win!

It is important to remember that, no matter how you saw things in the past, you do not have to see them that way now.

You may have been unnecessarily anxious while in some situations in the past; you need to recognise the fact that you have control over your responses in all situations, so it is you who controls how you feel and the way you react.

“If you are distressed by anything external, the pain is not due to the thing itself, but by your estimate of it; and this you have the power to revoke at any moment”

Many things such as your performance, your health, and your perspective, are potentially within your control. Once you accept that these events are within your control and that you can effect change, you will; Precisely because they “are” within your control.

You should focus on the things which are within your control, your thoughts and emotions, as these will either inspireor inhibit your performance.

Which brings us back to attitude! It is the determining factor, and though your attitude is formed over time by many elements, only you have control over it.

Your emotional reaction and anxious feelings are triggered by your perception of the event, rather than the event itself. If you are “really ready” for an event, self defeating beliefs which cause the anxious thoughts are negated by this state of mind..

The ideal state that you are required to be in at the time of competing is to be ‘Psyched’, to be “really ready” for the event. For Action Pistol Shooting this means being confident, relaxed, and completely focused on the job at hand; This can only be achieved through:- good planning, smart training, thorough match preparation, the use of solid routines and most importantly, self-discipline.

Perspective and Anxiety affects all of us, some more than others. All of us are required to know how to control it, and this is just another skill which has to be learnt and ingrained through hard work,practical experience,and self discipline,no different to any of the other technical skills that are required to be perfected to compete successfully in the discipline of Action Pistol Shooting.

Once you have self-control, realising of course that this is something you cannot achieve overnight; It will only be achieved by improving your confidence through perfecting your technique, and persistence. Then any setbacks will be viewed as temporary; Identify the cause and use it to provide a basis for learning. Improvement is a progression of eliminating mistakes; problems certainly wont disappear overnight and missing a goal means it needs to be reset. When trying something new, focus on the effect it has on your performance, not the evaluation of the thing itself.

*“ True confidence is based on the thoroughness of preparation.
Failure only comes through quitting! ”*

Developing a Winning Attitude:

You must become excited, confident and enthusiastic about your goals. A winner always has a goal, winners carefully plan to reach their goals, winners make total commitments to their goals, and winners have positive attitudes in all facet's of their lives. Winning is an inside job.....improve your self-discipline.....and give yourself permission to be a "WINNER"!

5. Patience!

Patience is the ability to wait for an outcome! Patience is the ability to bide your time while all the forces that you cannot control align themselves to help you accomplish what you, by yourself cannot do!

"Patience is the most potent skill of all..... and the simplest!"

Patience though simple is not easy, it is a challenge to master as at first it feels as if it is against nature, but once mastered it is one of the skills that is most conducive to fulfilling our nature. It is our nature as human beings to create our way of life and there is no more powerful tool for that job than patience. Our greatest achievements are accomplished over time, with considerable dedication and perseverance, neither of these qualities would be possible without patience!

Patience really is a virtue! yet most are likely to act as if impatience is a virtue; How often have you heard someone say "I have no patience", and as if they were proud of it! Nothing could be more further from the mark, nothing could be more destructive of happiness, fulfilment and success!

Impatience is just another name for instant gratification, one of the greatest afflictions of human kind, more evil has been done in the name of instant gratification than almost any other human foible. In order to have what we want right now, we all too willingly sacrifice reason, good judgement and even integrity.

We can rant and rave all we want about instant gratification - the I want it now and the sooner the better, but the fact is that this rarely happens. If we want to cure this affliction called instant gratification, all we have to do is develop patience. But how?

Well you need to start by realising that patience is not just a virtue, it's a skill just like all of the other things you need to learn to compete and shoot at the top levels of our sport, however like those other things it is a learnable skill and it can be mastered by anyone. It is also one of the most fulfilling of skills, because it allows you to relax, to regain your self-control, to restore a sense of well-being and balance.....even in the midst of chaos!

Patience allows you to rise above the chaos around you and understand that there are forces at work far beyond what you alone can muster. If you wait for these forces.....in other words, if you are patient..... they can be made to work for you, instead of against you!

So how do you learn patience? The same way you learned every other skill you now possess: through practice. But how does a body practice patience? Well its simple really..... you wait! In other words you practice waiting!

Next time you have to wait for something, don't think of it as waiting, think of it as practice. Think of it as developing a skill that will change your life. This is not a waste of time, but a way to use time to your maximum advantage! Once you develop that frame of mind, delays will only encourage you: setbacks strengthen you: and time perhaps for the first time in your life, will finally be on your side.

6. Irrational Thinking!

Do you know anyone who is completely rational?
Few of us exist in a totally rational state.

We are all irrational at times and this includes performance situations.

*One of the fundamental challenges is to assist you
as sports people evaluate situations more accurately.*

*With a clearer perspective, it is possible to entertain lofty dreams
and set challenging goals to realise them.*

*On the other hand those who lack clarity in their thoughts
are constantly enslaved by misconceptions, and often sell themselves short!*

Some common irrational thoughts are:

"I should win every competition or I'm a loser!"

With this you set yourself up for repeated pain and sorrow, you will soon quit!
Set goals to perform, and remember no-one can win all of the time, it does not
matter how good they are, for when you are at the top there is only one
way...and that is down!

That is not to say you won't reach the top on another day, but your philosophy
has to work this way for your survival in the sport

"I should never make mistakes!"

If you go around thinking you should never make errors you'll never learn! and
our recent history shows that there are a few of you here that need to repeat
that to yourselves a few times.

"I always lose to better shooters!"

Ignore perception of higher ranking, as it is only a reflection on the past
and that person has more to lose than you do!

"Only great shooters are truly confident!"

Your world is the sum of your total thoughts; confidence is available to everyone who expects the best, regardless of ability. and yes winning increases confidence.....**but so does confident thinking**

"I cant shoot well when I'm nervous!"

Feeling nervous is normal and expected, you would have us wondering if you were alive if this was not the case. The real enemy is nervousness combined with negative thinking. Nervousness combined with positive thinking provides a natural edge in focus and performance.

"Once I lose focus I can't get it back!"

You have lost your concentration and gotten upset. This then leads to further problems such as increased anxiety or lost confidence. It's impossible to remain focused on anything for long. The key is to regain your focus once it is lost. Don't allow mental mistakes to lead to negative thinking, such as dwelling on the reasons for a less than perfect shot, just re-adjust your focus as much as is needed to get you back on the job!

"Visualisation is only for dreamers!"

**If you have not reaped the benefits of imagery yet
.....then you are not doing your homework!**

The quality of your thinking directly affects your effort, motivation and activities. Once you rid yourself of the irrational notions of doom and gloom, you are then free to express your true inner strength!

7. Diet & Fitness

There is no special diet for the shooting athlete; however a healthy balanced diet combined with exercise helps to maintain the body in a fit condition to comfortably undertake the activities involved in these sporting disciplines!

Avoiding eating saturated fats and large amounts of high sugar content foods combined with a regular exercise programme will allow you to compete in this comfortable state. The two food groups mentioned above should be avoided on match days at all costs, as they interfere with your bodies fine motor skill abilities which are an essential function when controlling your shooting sports skills!

There are some specific resistance training and flexibility exercises attached as Appendix's A & B to this booklet, which are recommended for shooters to use.

Remember to Warm-up before stretching or any exercise activity!

Through warm-ups help to prevent injuries, by preparing the body for activity! Stretches can be used in the later part of a warm-up before resistance training.

Note Also:

When stretching & exercising that moderation is our prime consideration!

Please! remember that we are using these stretches and exercises to improve your flexibility and muscle tone for use in shooting competition, we are not trying to turn you into a weight lifter, as muscle bound athletes do not make good pistol shooters as we need fine control !

The weight training and resistance exercises are to be approached with caution. Find out what the maximum weight is that you can "Comfortably" handle in each of the exercises(this means the pucker-factor should definitely not be present), then use only 20% of that weight for your training exercises. We are only after muscle tone not Mr or Ms Universe.

Recommended Training Steps.

To warm-up undertake a slow jog or brisk walk for around 10 minutes, followed by some stretching exercises. Set up the resistance exercises in a circuit, and undertake the repetitions you have set for that session for each exercise; Use a 50/50 recovery period between exercises(this means if it takes you 3 minutes to do five reps then have 3 minutes rest before you start the next exercise) Following this session a few minutes warm down using stretches and walking to relax the muscles.

Remember to keep your fluid intake up while fitness training just as you do while you are practicing and in competition.

8. Warming-Up

This is probably one of the most neglected area for most who compete in shooting sports, as those involved either cannot see the need for it or only give it a half-hearted trial then discard it as of no use, as most view the warm-up as a physical process with most disciplines we participate in having low levels of physical activity in their competitions.

The physical warm-up should consist of a short walk or series of movements to get the blood circulating and the body warmed followed by some stretching exercises, which will then allow you to compete in a more comfortable and relaxed state after all that sitting around waiting for your turn to compete.

However, warming -up is more than just a physical process; If you are to perform well you must also be mentally and emotionally prepared.

If you are following the recommended planning and preparation techniques and are starting your build-up some days before the event; on arriving at the competition venue you then are required to withdraw your attention from outside factors and focus on those which will help your performance

The technical name for this is attunement; which means to “put in tune” to “adjust” to “become aware” or to “focus attention”.

The normal physical action of warming-up is that of “attuning to” your body focusing attention on its current state and attending to its needs. From this you will learn that these needs will vary from day to day; and in fact from individual to individual so warming-up with a team mate is not a viable option!

The mental equivalent of the physical warm-up is that of concentrating on the task at hand; the *emotional* equivalent is “psyching-up”; getting yourself in the right mood. In both cases, the process involves first noticing your thoughts and feelings and then replacing the distracting elements. Distractions that you don’t recognise and deal with will invariably contribute to a below-par performance, however well-prepared you may be physically.

How to Attune

There are six different factors which affect our performance. in order to ensure an effective mental and emotional preparation - whether for a competition, a practice session or training camp session - it is best to consider each of the following factors in turn:

- a) the place where you are to perform
- b) your physical sensations, thoughts and feelings

- c) the individuals you are with
- d) the group or team of which you are a part
- e) your objectives or purpose
- f) your tactics/approach - or way you intend to reach those objectives

Attuning to Physical Sensations, Thoughts and Feelings

Your thoughts and feelings probably vary more from day to day than do your physical sensations. Things at Work, home, personal problems and arguments may all drain much of your energy and attention from the task at hand. You may be physically present, but unfortunately you will not always realise that your attention is elsewhere. This means that you need to check each time, slowing down just enough for any underlying distractions to surface. The easiest way to do this is to sit down, let out a deep breath and *experience* yourself physically as being where you are. Then close your eyes and notice what's happening inside, especially any thoughts or feelings connected with what was happening to you before your arrival or is due to happen after you leave.

This process may be reinforced by an exercise that is particularly effective if you can find somewhere to be on your own. It allows the part of yourself that wants to participate in the training session or the competition to make a promise to the part which has other needs that these will be met later on when you can deal with them properly.

Initially, this exercise is best led by your coach, or by a fellow athlete.

Having identified your concerns and distractions, sit quietly, close your eyes, take a deep breath and allow yourself to settle heavily into your chair as you breathe out slowly.

"Imagine yourself sitting at a desk in front of a window. Look out and notice what you see, what the weather is like, what movement there may be. Then look down at the desk and notice a blank sheet of paper and a pen. Pick up the pen and write down a complete list of those concerns and distractions you identified. As you write, see the shape of your handwriting on the page, hear the point of the pen slide over the paper, feel the weight of your upper body on your arm. if you find it easier, you can draw a picture to represent the distractions or your distracted mood. When you have finished put down the pen, fold up the piece of paper and turn around. You see a box behind you, somewhere within reach. It may be on a shelf or on the floor. Notice how large it is, what colour it is, whether it is in the light or in the shadow. Open the lid. Then put the folded piece of paper inside the box, close the lid and turn back to the desk, settling back into your chair and once more looking out the window. "

Having done this, you can open your eyes, ready to interact with those around you. However, it is important that once your session or match is over, you again close your eyes and go back to this imaginary desk, turn around, open the box, get out and unfold the piece of paper and look to see what you wrote or drew. Sometimes this will no longer be of interest and that is fine but, if the exercise is to continue to work - and with time it can become increasingly effective - the part of you that has been promised attention later on must learn to trust that it will get that attention!

9. Practice Sessions.

So **Why** practice?What does practice do?

.....Practice makes permanent, so what you practice has to be technically correct. Consistency is what we are striving for, and as we found in our previous session consistency is achieved through being able to repeat the skill or performance on demand.

When do we practice?.....As we feel like it, on the weekends, only on Sundays or when your plan states you will practice.

How do we actually practice?.....How can we make our performance's consistent when they are subject to being performed and repeated on demand?.....

If you think practice sessions are for perfecting technical skills you are correct; however technical skills include more than just knowing how to fire a technically correct shot! Practice sessions should be used to learn the skills required to place you on the firing line in a position and condition to perform the skill at an optimum level. This range or set of skills will vary for all of you. The best way to learn these skills and to retain these skills, is through using pre-match, pre-string and pre-shot routines.

What is a routine?.....It is an ordered collection of thoughts and behaviours that is aimed at achieving the optimum attitude, level of focus, concentration and physical readiness for the first and subsequent shots in a string.

Why should you use one?

You will quite often hear top competitors say when they have finished an event, that they forgot to do this or that, and that failure has cost them points.

By deliberately sticking to a routine for each shot that is fired, a competitor can directly influence their concentration, focus and confidence. It is called focusing on the process. Competitors who do not have detailed routines often complain that they lose their concentration, and that they have trouble handling pressure situations, with a loss in confidence occurring as a result.

Ideally each routine will have a:

(A Pre-shot routine is used in this example)

STARTING CUE

- this starts the loop - it lets you know you are now in the routine.

[Use the Target facing or the Audible start signal as the cue]

THE LOOP

- your personal routine for each shot.

[Watch the dot - Control the trigger - Follow through - etc.]

END CUE

- lets you know that the routine has finished.

[use the recoil as the cue to end and restart the loop]

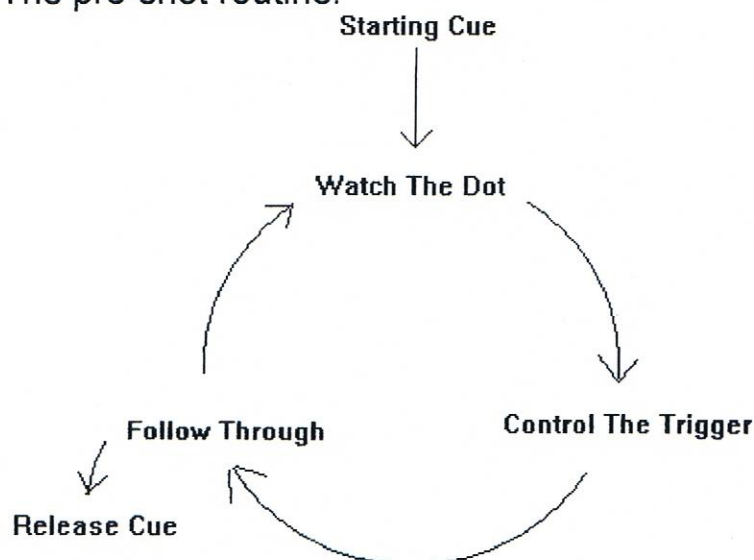
Once activated by the **STARTING CUE**; **THE LOOP** and **END CUE** are repeated for the number of shots required for that string

RELEASE CUE - this signals the need to relax your concentration.

[The targets face away - audible signal - unload command]

One of the most common responses from athletes is I can only focus on one thing at a time, well I'm not suggesting or asking you to do more than that, a routine (and we are using the pre-shot routine for this example) is a series of controls in the form of a circuit.

The pre-shot routine:



In developing a routine the following are important points to consider:

- * Are there any management tasks I can focus on?
- * What mental rehearsal / imagery is necessary?
- * What kind of self-talk is appropriate?
- * Can cue words be used to prompt by association?

- * What should you look at?
- * What should you listen to?
- * Do you want to particularly “feel” anything?
- * What sort of emotional state is necessary for the activity?
- * What level of arousal is appropriate for the skill required?
- * Does any specific body response need to be controlled?
- * Are there technical factors to focus on?

Once developed a routine is something to focus on if you get distracted, or when pressure situations occur, the routine acts as an effective “security blanket” which allows the competitor to maintain control and have confidence in their ability.

Having spent time developing the routines script you must then use the routine in practice to identify any rough edges or omissions. The best way to accomplish this is to record the script on audio tape and to “dry-fire” practice shots with the tape playing. Take notes during the session and use these to modify the script.

Routines will become refined over a period of time, so expect that yours might change a little as you get the chance to use it in practice and competition.

Routines should be developed for the following areas; Pre-Match, Pre-String and Pre-Shot.

If you are prepared to put the effort into developing these routines your consistency of performance will improve considerably.

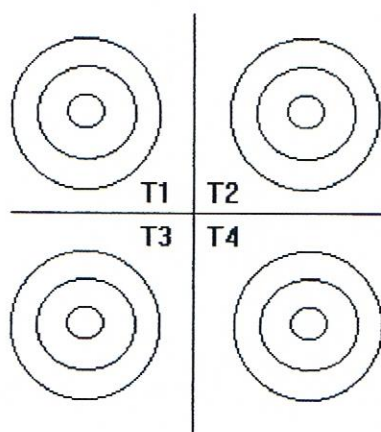
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NRA Action Pistol Training Scoresheet

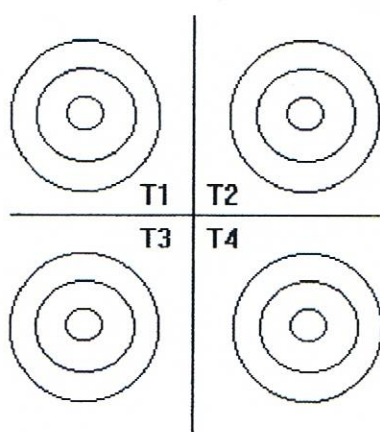
Name:

Date: Time: Venue:

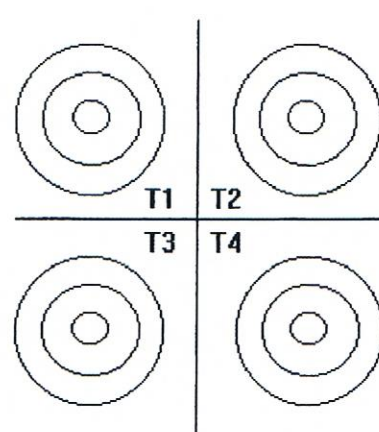
Plot all shots which fall outside the inner half of the ten ring:-

**Barricade**

	X	A	B	C
T1				
T2				
T3				
T4				
Total				

**Practical**

	X	A	B	C
T1				
T2				
T3				
T4				
Total				

**Moving Target**

	X	A	B	C
T1				
T2				
T3				
T4				
Total				

10yds							
10yds							
15yds							
15yds							
20yds							
20yds							
25yds							
25yds							

Match Totals

Barricade	-	x
Practical	-	x
Moving Target	-	x
Falling Plates	-	x
Event Total	-	x

Environmental Conditions:- WET [Circle one] DRY

Temperature:	Hot	Warm	Cool	Cold	
Light:	Very Bright	Bright	Good	Dull	Dark
Cloud Cover:	Heavy	Light	Scattered	Clear	
Wind:	Blustery	Strong	Breezy	Calm	
Wind Direction:	Up - Down or Across Range				
Range use:	Busy	Light	On my own		
Back Ground Noise:	Loud	Distant	Occasional	None	
Rings Visible: If you can see the scoring rings circle the appropriate target numbers T1-T4 on the scoring charts.					

Your Condition: [Circle those that apply]

Attitude: (place mark on scale)
Excellent [-----] Poor
Equipment: Normal set-up. Trying a new piece. if using a new piece of equipment state what.
Were you: Relaxed Worried Up-tight Happy Sad Focused Distracted Other(state).....

Comments:

10. Getting Real in Practice!

Many shooters only go through the motions in practice, maybe hoping to magically wake up one day and display their true star quality when the competition begins.

For those who follow this form of training activity they would be better cleaning out the loading room or dusting off old trophies.

“True competitors make their practice as worthwhile as their matches.”

To get the most out of your practice sessions you need to develop an attitude that places “practice” as the most decisive factor in controlling the outcome of any match!

Your technique, control and self discipline are firmly established in these practice sessions, and being well prepared increases your confidence, protecting you from the conditions in a match which are outside of your control.

For us:

Realistic practice is extremely necessary, as we have only a few major competitions in each year where we can hone the skills we require to succeed in this sport, so that you “are really ready” when it counts!

Your challenge:

Is to make this practice “seem realistic”, while varying the content of the practice sessions and still remaining completely focused.

How do you do this?.....Well that is going to depend on the individual shooter, but the first step is in making a commitment to establishing a positive attitude towards practice.

Be it on-range technical training or in establishing the mental skills that this sport in particular requires!

Combining smart physical practice with smart mental practice is a powerful tool that is there for all to use, and as your routines through practice become more match realistic, your visualisation will also improve! This in turn will enhance your on range performance!

So the message is:

You can either decide to do the housework.....or get real in your practice.

Which is more important?....I'll leave it up to you to decide which!

11. Preparing for Competition.

Prepare.

To produce a good performance you need to give some thought to what sort of outcomes you want. These desired outcomes will vary for each of you, but should include goals such as to achieve or better your personal best score, in both the overall and individual matches, enjoy the competition, eliminate silly mistakes.

Review your competition plan, look for any area that has potential for problems, and develop a strategy for dealing with them if they do arise - leave nothing about your performance to chance. Make no assumptions, when working through potential problems and developing strategies to overcome these, use Murphy's law, "what ever can go wrong will, and it will happen to me at some time". By applying this law to your competition plan, and thinking through how you will respond to each and every potential problem; when they do occur your response is pre-planned and the disruption to your competition focus will be minimal; if you fail to work through this process the disruption to your competition may well be disastrous.

Once you have developed a good competition plan then have faith in it and back yourself to be able to carry it out. Get out there, have fun and enjoy just doing it! When you strike problems, think about your plan and the strategies you have for dealing with problems trust yourself to do well.

Careful planning for a successful competition should cover.

The plan to attend this particular competition.

[Once you have developed a basic competition plan it can then be modified to suit each competition you attend.]

This competition plan should include:

- The relevant section of your training plan.

- The when, why and how you are going to follow the plan.

- A written physical equipment checklist, (this is the do I have it with me one).

- A written equipment maintenance checklist, (what's falling off, or damaged).

Pre-competition routine.

This includes sorting out your personal life and the day to day activities that are a part of living, the hassle and problems in this area are required to be dealt with and closed, as you do not want to take them with you into the competition. This routine should include the final checks and controls, associated with your preparation for this competition(equipment etc.) It will also include a final check of your competition entry, travel, accommodation and meal requirements. Leave nothing to chance.

Pre-match routine.

This is the routine you use on the day of the competition. It needs to be structured so that it can be carried out no matter where you are competing, and at what time you are starting. It usually covers the period between waking to walking onto the range to shoot.

This is not a rigidly constructed routine, it must be flexible, but contain all of the things you must do before stepping onto the range to shoot, for some competitors it may only begin when they arrive at the venue, or at a certain point prior to competing. This is the routine that prepares you for competition. It is required to contain elements which will place you on the firing line, with a good attitude, and focused on the job at hand.

Pre-string routine.

This is a controls and checks routine, is the pistol loaded, is my magazine seated correctly, do you know what string this is, is the dot on, have you got your ear and eye protection on, is your mover compensator adjusted to the correct direction, are you focussed, are you happy, you are now going into auto pilot mode!

Pre-shot routine.

The starting cue, the loop, the end cue, the loop again(for as many shots as the string requires, the end cue(of the final shot), then the release cue, relax!

Comment.

By using this approach you are allowing your focus to gradually narrow over a period of time to it's key point.....acquiring the target for your first shot

The competition plan also requires;

Strategies for dealing with problems.

A reminder never to assume all is OK!..... or to take anything for granted.

(failing to observe this basic rule, will I can guarantee you, at some point in the future, take a large chunk out of your posterior and also cause your bottom lip to droop considerably)

Review.

Once the competition is finished, sit down with your diary and do an objective(fact-based) review of what happened, record scores and the result. Also write down what worked well, and what did not. Do not let your feelings cloud your judgement as this will reduce the future value of the information.

Evaluate.

Once you have had a couple of weeks off shooting to recover from the experience of your last competition, you will need to sit down and analyse the review that you did.

This analysis can be a bit more subjective and needs to focus on what worked in your plan and what(if anything) didn't work. Ask yourself why these things happened; was it the plan or the way you carried it out(your attitude / effort / concentration) that let you down.

For this analysis to be of value you must be brutally honest and truthful with yourself. If necessary get a second opinion from your coach if you are unsure about something.

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Sample:- Pre-Match Routine For Practice Sessions & Competition.

40 minutes prior to start time.

Load magazines, and check all equipment you require is in place.

30 minutes prior to start time.

Back up and final equipment check.

Undertake a light warm up. [brisk walk; 3-5 minutes]

Followed by selected stretching exercises. [5-10 minutes]

15 minutes from start time move into the range area where you will be shooting. During the next 10 minutes relax and using your cues carry out visualisation techniques.

5 minutes prior to start sit behind but in line with the shooting position you will be using facing down range looking at the target area, this will allow full eye adjustment for the light conditions.

Notes:-

Remember your fluid intake, and don't forget to blink on a regular (normal) basis.

Also a reminder to build a disruption into your practice match sessions, (alarm clock or what ever)

An Idea !

When practicing use a ghetto blaster and four tapes. Put the range commands and time sequences (using an audible electronic timer) on to a separate tape for each of the four events. Then when you are practicing on your own you can practice in conditions similar to a competition.

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12. Choking in Competition!

What causes it?It's your interpretation of a situation or task as being important which creates feelings of anxiety and tension which distract you from the task at hand and therefore impede performance.

The key word is interpretation, because in actuality, the situation is not making you tense, you are making yourself tense! Anxiety does not exist outside of your head! Choking is a decrease in performance due to too much perceived stress. You need to learn to interpret the situations you find yourselves in as an opportunity to succeed, rather than as a chance to fail!

There are physical consequences from this stress; you are so worried, unfocused and physically tense that there is no way you can let your natural instincts take over. You tend to grip things tighter, have blurred vision, and fatigue prematurely as your breathing is short, rapid and shallow, as your breathing gets shallower and shallower you then begin to literally choke, and you are mostly not even aware it is happening.

You need to develop the ability to stay positive and focused on the job at hand, without worrying about the external variables over which you have no control.

There are tools available for you to use to help you regain your focus;

They are:

Imagery:

Take all your negative thoughts and imagine crumpling them up into a ball and then throwing them away. Or mentally put all those negative thoughts in your shooting bag and zip it up! This way they are no longer a factor. Doing this puts you back in control!

Positive Self talk:

If you find yourself saying something negative, re-phrase it into something positive, as this allows you to change your point of reference. You are what you think! In our sport it can be a problem or an opportunity - it's entirely up to you!

Relaxation Techniques:

Controlled Breathing and Progressive Muscle Relaxation we have already dealt with in detail during the psychologists sessions and I hope you are all working with these aids.

Narrow Your Focus:

See only your target, this will help keep your focus on what you should be doing rather than what might happen!

Choking is something that can be constructively dealt with. It's up to you to not only be positive and control your thoughts, but also to have the self-awareness to know when things aren't going as they should and utilise all your tools and resources to turn the situation around!

Reduce your tendency to choke - Be Prepared!

13. Combating Burnout in Sport!

If you are a serious competitor, and you have been sarcastic, argumentative, and irritable in recent weeks, this may not indicate a severe personal problem or a mood disorder; You might be experiencing some of the beginning symptoms of burnout. Burnout is not a reason for panic, but you should take time to understand and combat this challenging condition.

Description of Burnout

Burnout in sport is often defined as physical, emotional and mental exhaustion, but it can also be described as the distress resulting from such exhaustion. It's a condition in which the athlete experiences stress over an extended period of time resulting in reduced motivation and interest in the activity. In short, you're worn out, tired of the sport, and don't want to see another pistol, target or range again!

How could burnout possibly occur to individuals so committed to their sport, so excited by the thrill of the performance, and so focused on continual achievement?

Well these positive traits of commitment and desire are often the very cause of the problem. Individuals who take their sport less seriously rarely experience burnout, but they never maximise their performance either. If you have experienced burnout, start by giving yourself credit that you care.

Causes and Solutions to Reverse the Onset of Burnout

There are many causes of burnout and it usually develops slowly over time rather than suddenly. Let's briefly examine three of the most common causes of burnout with solutions to reverse the onset of burnout.

You may need to combine these solutions to meet your specific needs. If you are completely exhausted mentally and physically, and have already reached burnout, the only real solution is to take time off from your sport. return to sport when you are ready again, with greater knowledge to avoid becoming another victim of burnout.

Cause: Pressure to Win

Whether you're struggling to break into the top ranking's or just fighting to remain in your grade, too much pressure to win or perform (from others or self imposed) can be extremely frustrating when the results are not coming as fast as you expect. It's a vicious circle in that your ambition and drive to succeed actually causes your performance to decline. You eventually throw in the towel rather than patiently discovering the key to improvement.

Solution: Rediscover the Process

Winning is great, but remember not to put the cart before the horse. Throw all your mental and physical energy into what you are actually doing, and forget about the outcome of winning versus losing! Get in touch with the intangibles such as striving to learn, find meaning in your activities, and find success in performance rather than winning. When you are away from the pressure to win, winning often takes care of itself.

Cause: Overworked and lacking Fun

Whenever the fun of sport vanishes for an extended period of time, you are announcing your candidacy for burnout. You may become too serious or too intense about performing well and the whole point of the activity is lost. You spend all your time working on your sport and no time is left to live. Sport at any level should be fun, or performance will decline and burnout becomes more likely.

Solution: Schedule Fun into Your Life

Since you are so good at remaining on schedule and training to perfection, you might as well adjust your schedule to find a place for fun too. Reduce the number of hours you spend training and plan in time for social activities and other events that have nothing to do with your sport. Find another sport and schedule that in too, or just plan time to rest. When you are practicing, look for ways to enjoy the experience. As you inject enjoyment back into your life, sport becomes less of a chore and you're free to be more creative too.

Cause: Poor Social Support

Poor social support is one of the most common sources of burnout in sport. This might mean poor relations with your coach and fellow competitors, or the support is not there in the home environment! Whatever the case, it is very difficult to remain upbeat and motivated in a climate of low perceived social support.

Solution: Reconnect with Others

It's impossible to be best friends with everyone in your sport or to have the complete support of everyone you know outside of sport. As you strive for optimal performance, however, it's sometimes easy to forget the enormous impact that social support has on both self-esteem and performance. You might figure, there isn't any time to develop those relationships because you are too busy performing and trying to succeed. The fact is, a balanced social life away

from the range, and social cohesion within the sports environment, acts as a buffer against potential burnout.

Share your feelings with others and they will reciprocate. Get out of the sport setting and go see a movie. Keep in touch with friends and relatives and share your good and bad times with them.

A More Serious Problem?

Before you can combat burnout, you must first recognise it as a problem and then act to change it. Burnout is so common in sport that this addition to your mental equipment skills is an essential part of competing successfully.

Remember to reduce the pressure to win; Find time to have fun; and get connected socially.

If these tips don't work and your feelings of burnout continue, even after time off, you may want to seek the assistance of a Psychologist or other qualified health professional!

14. Match Ammunition.

*** *A Manufacturing Check list* ***

Cases.

- (a) Cartridge case lengths should all be the same, if not varying crimp results which alters the pressures and performance, even new cases vary in length, you must check all case lengths.
- (b) When you trim the cases to length make sure the length matches your chamber length.
- (c) Cases should also be kept in batches, as the older they get, and the more use they get, the more brittle they become. This results in the their ability to grip the projectile changing.
- (d) Match cases should be relatively new, cycle the older cases into the practice bin.
- (e) Cases for match use should all be of the same manufacture, as some manufacturers cases have different case capacities to others.

Primers.

- Primers vary from batch to batch, even from the same manufacturer.
- (a) Note the batch number you are using, when you change to a new batch the ammunition will need to be re-tested.
 - (b) Storage of primers is critical, store in a cupboard that is damp free and not touching an external wall of the building (as these are subject to temperature changes of larger variance than internal walls). An old fridge(not working) is an excellent place to store primers.
 - (c) Never handle primers with bare fingers, always use gloves if you have to touch them.
 - (d) If you spill primers, don't use them in match ammo, they will be ok for practice use if not contaminated.

Powder.

- Powder also varies from batch to batch.
- (a) When you find a batch that works well, try to obtain as much of it as you can. When you change batches re-test the ammunition.
 - (b) Check the powder measure throws at regular intervals, when loading match ammunition as often as every 10 rounds is not unreasonable.
 - (c) Powder is very susceptible to moisture changes, never leave powder in the powder measure on the loading press, always return it to the tin when you have finished loading.

- (d) If the powder tin is large and the quantity of powder small, the moisture in the air in the tin will be absorbed into the powder. Use a container that will just hold the powder quantity to be stored each time, to help avoid this problem.
- (e) Store all powder in the same place even your partial quantities, this will help to ensure the properties will be the same from tin to tin.
- (f) Always load under the same conditions, and label each loading session with the date, primer type and batch no., powder type and batch no., time of day, temperature and weather conditions.
- (g) Avoid loading in wet weather, as the powder will absorb moisture from the air, and if you are travelling overseas to compete the temperature changes involved may cause problems with some powders.
- (h) Sieve the powder to remove all foreign materials, that could cause a hang up in the powder measure.

Projectiles.

All projectiles should be checked as they vary from batch to batch, as the manufacturers often use different sub contractors to make the projectiles for them.

- (a) A random sample of 10 per 100 should be checked for size on all projectile types.
- (b) Check the weight of all jacketed projectiles by random sampling of 10 per 100.
- (c) Lead projectiles from all manufacturers can vary by up to 5 grains, it pays to weigh lead projectiles into batches, so a consistent weight of projectile is loaded.
- (d) Check the case expander on your press, it should only measure .001 thou less than the projectile diameter;

This is a very important measurement it must be right!

If the expander is too small your projectiles will be damaged, which can cause increased group sizes and lead build up in the barrel.

Chronograph Test Sheet.

Name:

Date:/...../ 19.....

Firearm.

Make: Model: Cal:

Barrel length: Bore Diameter:

Environmental Conditions.
 Temperature: Wind speed: Wind Direction: Down Range: Up Range:
 Across Range: [Circle]

 Lighting conditions: Excellent Good Fair Poor Artificial
 [Circle]
Ammunition.

Case. Manufacturer: Batch No.

Primer. Manufacturer: Batch No. Type:

Powder.

Manufacturer: Batch No. Type: Weight:gms.

Projectile.

Manufacturer: Batch No. Style: Weight:gms.

Chronograph. Make: Model:

Record fps for each shot.

One: Two: Three: Four:

Five: Six: Seven: Eight:

Nine: Ten:

High =fps Low =fps Extreme spread =fps

Average =fps Multiplied by Projectile Weight = Divided by 1000 =

Power Factor =

Average Group Size of test load:

Problem Solving Strategies.

These notes will be added to your folder as area's of personal concern are identified in conjunction with your coaching staff and these strategies are customised for your use !

Appendix: A

Resistance Exercises

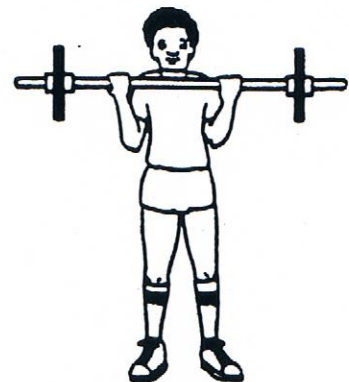
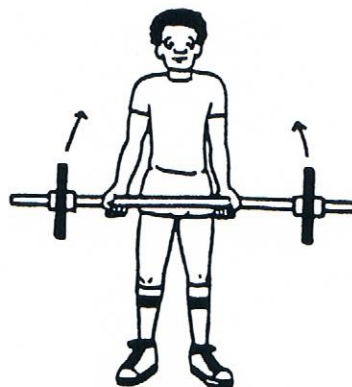
Arm Curls

Muscles: Arm flexors (biceps)

Directions:

1. Either sit or stand.
2. Grasp the bar with an underhand grip.
3. Flex arms to lift bar up to shoulders.
4. Use only the arms to perform this movement, do *not* permit the body to swing. (This is easier to control if the athlete performs the exercise in a sitting position.)

Variation: Same exercise can be performed with a reverse or overhand grip.

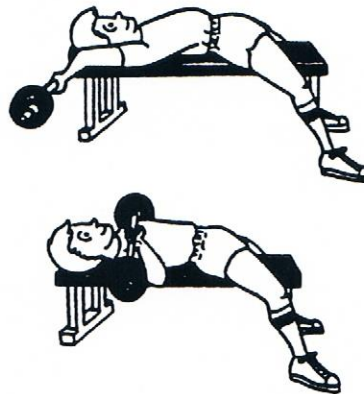


Bent-Arm Pullover Muscles: Chest, shoulder and arm extensors

Directions:

1. Lay on bench with head and upper shoulders supported.
2. Reach back to bar placed on floor close to bench.
3. Use overhand grip with hands close together.
4. Lift weight over head and lower down onto chest.
5. Try to keep elbows tucked in near to head throughout movement.

Variation: Use dumbbells instead of bar.



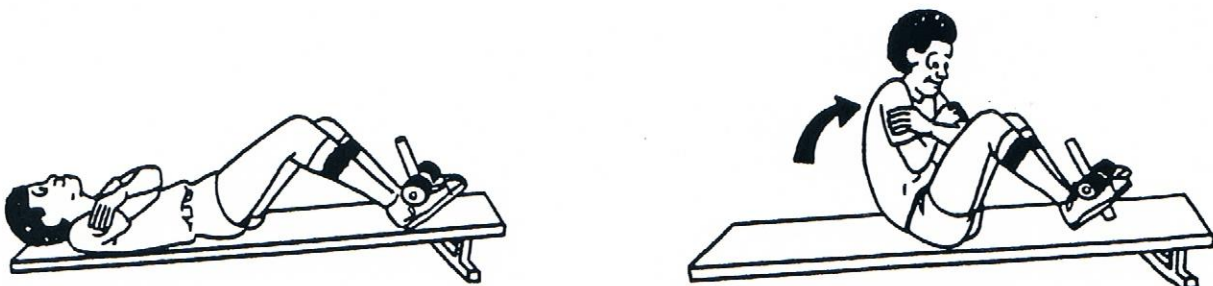
Bent-Knee Sit-Ups Muscles: Abdomen

Directions:

1. Sit with knees bent, hands crossed over chest, and chin tucked in.
2. Begin sit-up by first lifting shoulders, then the remaining
3. Lift up

**DO NOT USE!
AN ALTERNATIVE WILL
BE GIVEN!**

Sit-ups should *not* be performed with straight legs.

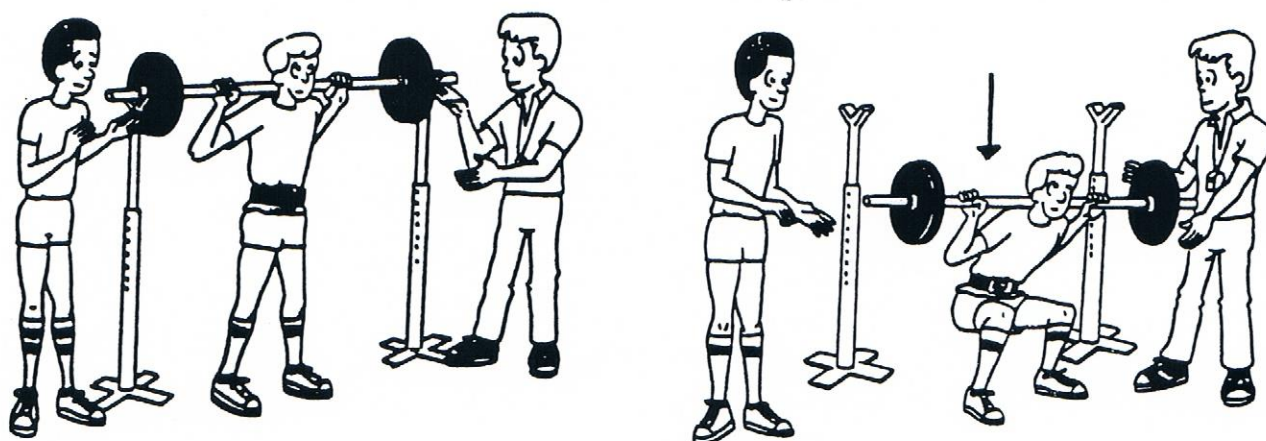


Half Squat

Muscles: Lower and upper back, upper legs

Directions:

1. Always wear a weight belt and have two spotters available to lift and support weight when using free weights.
2. Bar is placed on a rack just below shoulder height.
3. Athlete steps under bar, positions feet slightly wider than shoulder width with feet pointing outward.
4. Keep heels flat, back straight, and head up (focusing on a mark on the ceiling may help).
5. Lift weight off rack, bend knees to lower weight until thighs are parallel with floor.
6. Straighten knees, using leg and hip muscles to lift weight.
7. Keep back straight and head up throughout the lift.

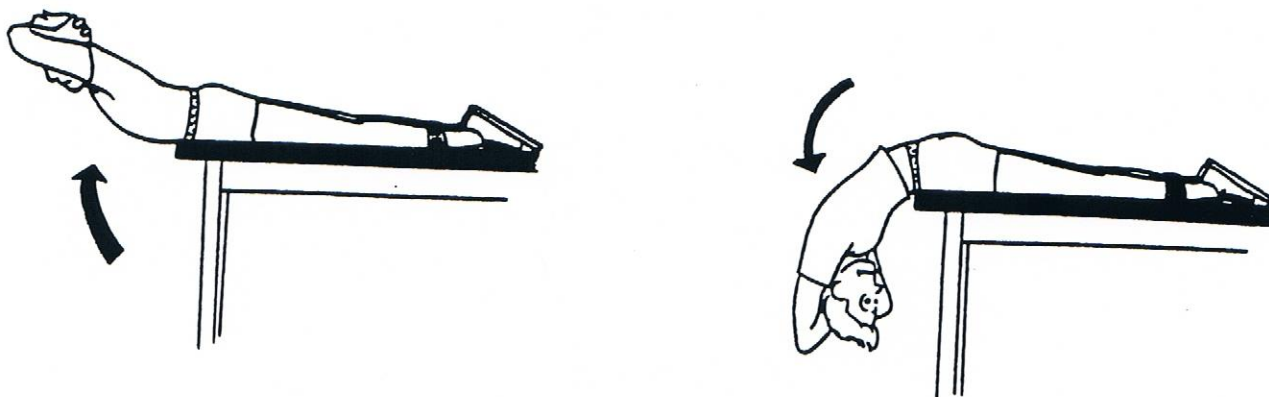


Back Extension

Muscles: Lower back

Directions:

1. Use a bench that supports the hips and allows feet to be fixed. (This can be achieved by having a partner hold athlete's lower legs down.)
2. Lock fingers behind head and bend so that head is close to floor.
3. Lift upper body as high as possible, then slowly lower and repeat.

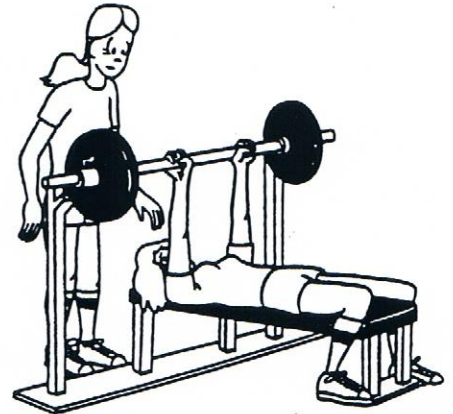
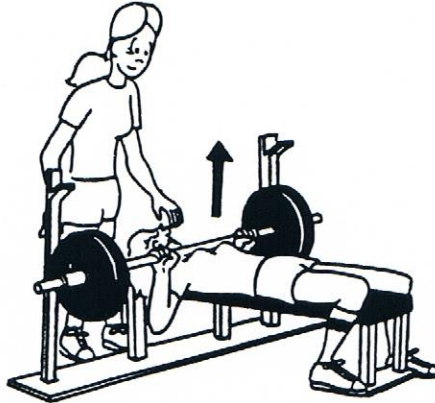
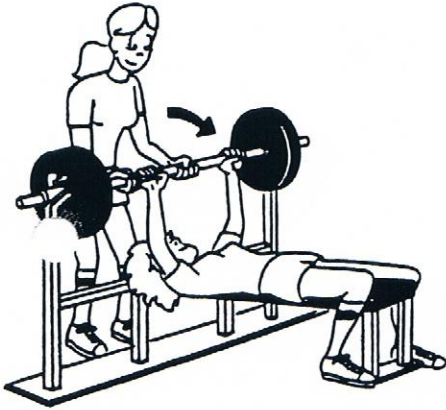


Bench Press

Muscles: Chest, shoulders, and arms

Directions:

1. Hands hold bar a little wider than shoulder width apart.
2. Spotter(s) helps position bar above shoulders.
3. Bar is lowered to chest, then pushed back above shoulders.
4. Keep feet, hips, and head down on bench while exercising.
5. Spotter(s) helps return bar when exercise is completed.



Wrist Curl

Muscles: Wrist flexors

Directions:

1. Hold bar with underhand grip, hands about shoulder width apart.
2. Athlete sits and forearms rest on thighs.
3. Keeping forearms fixed, allow weight to fully extend wrists, then flex wrists to lift weight as far as possible forward.



Reverse Curl

Muscles: Wrist extensors and elbow flexors

Directions:

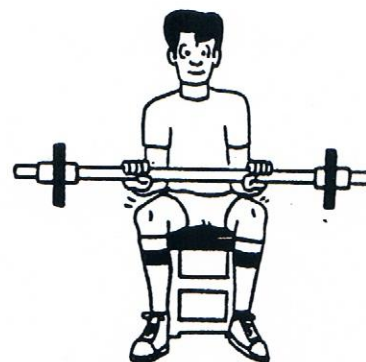
1. Either sit or stand.
2. Grasp the bar with an overhand grip.
3. Flex arms to lift bar up to shoulders.
4. Use only the arms to perform this movement; do *not* permit the body to swing. (This is easier to control if the athlete performs the exercise from a sitting position.)



Reverse Wrist Curl **Muscles:** Wrist extensors

Directions:

1. Hold bar with overhand grip, hands about shoulder width apart.
2. Athlete sits and forearms rest on thighs.
3. Keeping forearms fixed, allow weight to fully extend wrists, then flex wrists to lift weight as far as possible forward.



Flexibility Exercises

Bent-Knee Stretch

Muscles: Lower back and hamstrings

Directions:

1. Grasp ankles and pull until you feel the stretch.
2. Hold five counts and relax. Repeat.



Toe Pull

Muscles: Groin and thighs

Directions:

1. Pull on toes while pressing legs down with elbows.

Variation: Lean forward and try to touch head to feet or floor.

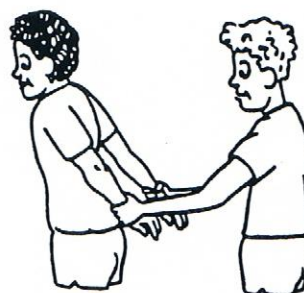


Shoulder Stretch

Muscles: Shoulders

Directions:

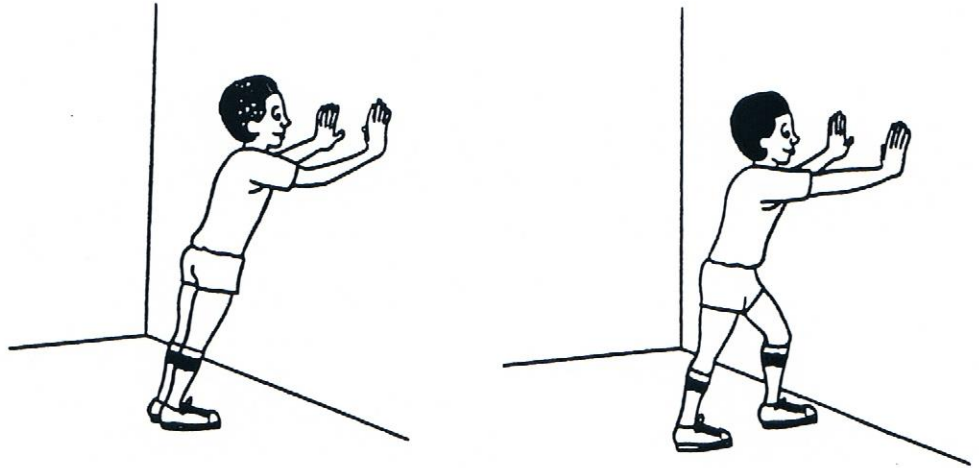
1. Pull arms back until partner feels stretch.
2. Hold for five counts, then relax.



Directions:

1. Stand about 3 ft from wall, feet slightly apart.
2. Lean forward, keep heels on floor, and feel stretch in calves.

Variation: Concentrate on one leg at a time. Contract calf muscle briefly, then relax and feel stretch in Achilles tendon.

**Seated Toe Touch**

Muscles: Back and hamstrings

Directions:

1. With toes pointed, slide hands down legs until you feel stretch.
2. Hold five counts and relax.
3. Now grasp ankles and pull until head approaches legs, then relax.
4. Draw toes back and slowly attempt to touch toes with your hands.

Variation: Try with legs apart.

**Leg Pull**

Muscles: Hamstrings and gluteal (rear) muscles

Directions:

1. Pull leg toward and across chest.
2. Feel stretch high in hamstring.
3. Hold five counts and relax.



Directions:

1. With arms extended to side, twist as far as possible.
2. Hold, then twist back and repeat.



Neck Circles

Muscles: Neck, shoulders, and upper back

Directions:

1. Gently roll head in full circle, first to one side, then the other.



Stride Stretch

Muscles: Inside thigh muscles (groin)

Directions:

1. Assume stride position with hands on floor or chair for balance.
2. Feel stretch, hold, then relax.
3. Put arm and shoulder inside front leg to accentuate stretch.



Back and Leg Stretch

Muscles: Lower back, hamstrings, and gluteal muscles

Directions:

1. Pull ankles to feel stretch.

Variation: With practice try to touch fingers or palms to the floor.

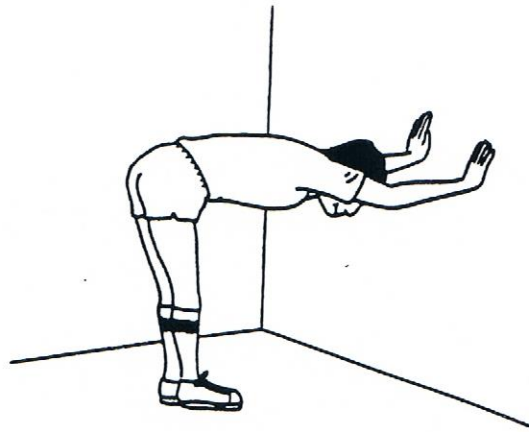


The Bow

Muscles: Arms, back, legs

Directions:

1. Bow at waist.
2. Put hands on wall and feel stretch from hands to heels.



Backover

Muscles: Hamstrings and low back

Directions:

1. With knees bent bring legs over head.
2. Try to touch floor with toes until you feel stretch.
3. Hold for five counts, then relax.



Parallel Bar Dip

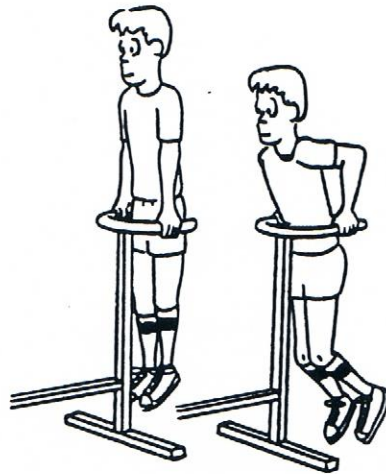
Muscles: Shoulder, upper and lower arm

Directions:

1. Support the body with straight arms
2. Lower the body until the chest is level with the bars.
3. Explosive push to lift body to starting position.

Variation:

1. Suspend weights from a waist belt to increase resistance.

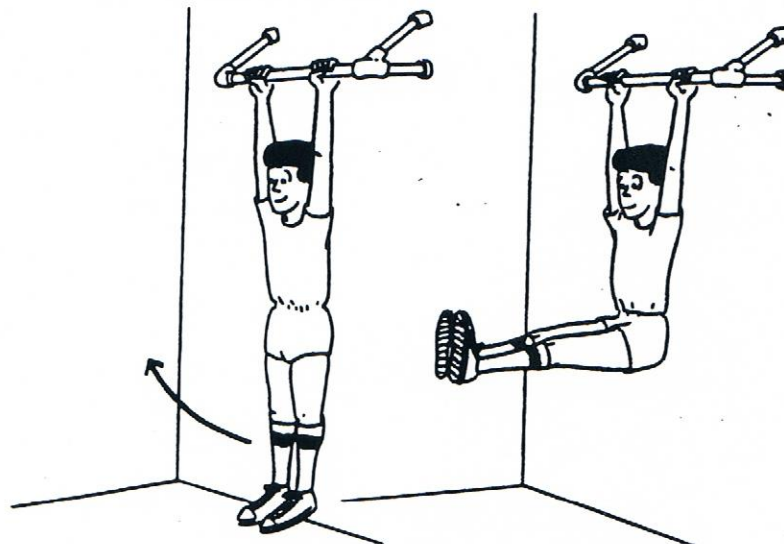


Leg Raise

Muscles: Trunk

Directions:

1. Hold wall bar or overhead bar with palms facing outward.
2. Lift legs until they are parallel to ground.
3. Lower legs and repeat.



Side Stretch

Muscles: Arms and trunk

Directions:

1. Grasp hands above head and slowly bend to one side.
2. Push gently, hold and relax.
3. Switch sides.

