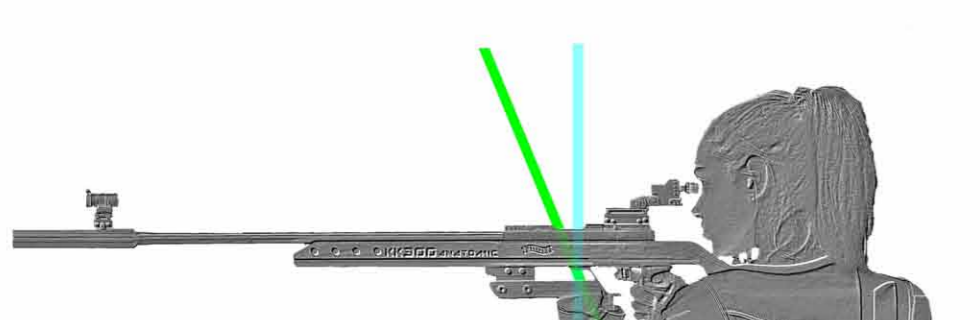


If you push your front sight tunnel back, the front sight appears larger and movement slower. The target image becomes 'steadier'...



The 'architecture' of the standing position comprises a load-bearing column and a supporting buttress. These two imaginary lines cross roughly at the point where the left hand meets the stock. The silhouette on the right demonstrates these static elements. Trainers should take careful note of them when developing a shooter's stance. You can feel this load-bearing column by sensing how the weight of the gun is being carried down through the body. The supporting hand, lower arm, hip and left leg should form a vertical line as far as possible, thus ensuring the load is carried by the bones. Muscle tension along this line should be kept as low as possible to ensure the gun is steady. Special attention should be paid to the left upper arm, which should be as relaxed as possible. The supporting right flank of the stance complements the load-bearing column. It counteracts recoil, thereby ensuring the frame stays right. Moving the hip forward and carefully positioning the right foot helps the flank gain extra stability. Passive stability is primarily provided around the right upper body by the shooting jacket. A certain amount of active tension can sometimes be deployed here to increase rigidity. The left foot is hardly ever moved and stays in the same position, usually at a right angle to the target line. The right foot, however, can be manoeuvred in various ways to strengthen or regulate the stance. It can be moved and turned slightly in any direction to make necessary adjustments – even during a series.



Position your left foot at a right angle to your weight. It should carry 60 – 80 percent of your weight. If the soles of your feet start to hurt, loosen your laces. Move your feet during a series and shift your weight. You might also consider trying different shoes. Barefoot running will strengthen your muscles, excess weight creates added pressure...



In the standing position, movement and the aiming area are 2 – 3 times bigger than in the prone position, so it's a good idea to use a larger front sight. As a rule of thumb, your ring shouldn't come into contact with the target centre during the final phase of the aiming process.



Your shooting clothing plays a big part in supporting your stance. When your trousers and jacket are correctly arranged, they give your stance a great deal of stability by wrapping your hip and lumbar region in a rigid 'shell'. To ensure you can make the most of this effect, you should use good quality clothing that is also continue to provide support over prolonged use. The fit of your clothing is important, too – the better the various elements can be tailored to your proportions and the unique features of the shooting position, the more stable and comfortable your 'shell'. One of the most critical areas on a shooting jacket is the point where the elbow rests on the hip. The contact surface on the sleeve should 'stick' securely to the jacket so that you can relax your left upper arm completely. -> The width of a shooting jacket is determined by the position of the buttons. Rules stipulate that a shooter's jacket should not be too tight, and this is checked in overlap tests. However, the jacket should not be wider than stipulated either, as the shooter's standing position would lose support. You should therefore keep track of your weight and adjust the position of your buttons as necessary. Losing or gaining even just 300 grams can have an impact. The areas of the jacket responsible for supporting the spinal column at the side and to the rear are highlighted in green in the picture on the left. When you set your rifle down on your stand to reload, your jacket shouldn't move. You should only move your rifle with your left arm, keeping your hips and upper body 'rigid' and ensuring your whole body doesn't lean toward the stand. This helps your stance remain consistent and enables you to set up your zero point much faster. How you position your feet determines your leg position in your stance and your alignment with the target – the zero point.



A straight line to the target is a key point of reference for orientation. Before shooting, you should identify this line precisely and position your feet exactly on it. This ensures that the proportions in the space are in harmony with our right-angled sense of perception, making it easier for us to identify movement and keep our balance. These rules apply to both air-rifle and small-calibre shooting, your home range and, more importantly, to competitions at unfamiliar ranges. It is only by ensuring you always stand the same way no matter where you are that you will be able to get into your stance quickly and accurately. The most important tool for identifying a straight line to the target is a measuring rule. You should place it half a foot's length in front of the line and ensure it runs parallel to the line. Your stand is another important point of reference for your spatial awareness. You should set it up so that it is always in the same position and arrangement in relation to your feet.



It's worthwhile taking a closer look at how to get the measuring rule into the perfect position. The long section must run parallel to the target line so that you can see the correct alignment from above. The key dimensions are the gap between your feet (A), measured from the outside edges of your feet, and – if you position your right foot further back – the distance between it and the rule. If you take a break or have to leave your firing point in the final, you'll appreciate the importance of a precisely positioned measuring rule, which will help you get back into the same position in no time.



Put your head to your sight, you should be relaxed and looking directly into the sight. Lower and relax your right shoulder. Your butt plate should sit firmly against it. Use your shoulder straps to get the right amount of 'tightness'.



Adjust your trigger blade so that it is perpendicular and moves parallel to the barrel and ensure your contact with it is always consistent. Your hand should have a firm grip. Lean back your upper body with your shoulders almost pointing at the target. The supporting function of your shooting jacket is regulated by its width. Move the buttons until it provides the right amount of support. However, you must take note of the rules on overlapping. Move your hips forward and keep them parallel to the target. This will transfer your weight to your left foot. Your right leg should be a little further out, it should carry 20 – 40 % of your weight. Ensure your right knee is straight. Turn it slightly for comfort. If one of your knees starts to 'wobble', gently turning your foot helps to stabilise it. Your right foot should usually be turned out slightly. Your weight will be carried on its outer edge. If your shoe slips, clean the floor and the sole of your shoe. To ensure your foot can move, don't tie your shoelaces too tightly.



Lower your left shoulder and rest your upper left arm against your upper torso, although gently enough so that your pulse does not start to interfere.

Your stand can be as high as your shoulders when in position. Neither head covering nor visor are permitted to come into contact with the diopter or iris aperture.

There are many different ways to use your hand and wrist. This is the classic solution – hand in a fist and wrist straight.

Rest your left elbow on the top of your hip. It must be firmly rooted in place so that you can relax your arm.

Move your pelvis forward with your left hip slightly raised so that your elbow can easily reach it.

Keep your left leg (almost) vertical. It should be straight and not tense. The hook-and-loop fastenings at the thighs enable you to control how tight your trouser legs are. This can help to control how far forward you are leaning.

Your left knee should not be bent, twisted or under strain. Your trouser leg will support your posture.

Air rifle and small calibre shooting are becoming increasingly similar. If you shoot both, often on the same day, these growing similarities will be welcome. They apply to the rifle and stock, the stance and the sequences of movement. Ivana's stances are virtually identical. When using the heavier small-calibre rifle, she leans her upper body back a little more and stands with her feet slightly further apart.

Sufficient hearing protection is essential for both air-rifle and small-calibre shooters. You should always plug your ears before a shot is fired. That also applies to trainers, match officials and spectators alike. Our sensitive sensory organs need to be protected, first and foremost for health reasons. Any soundwave as loud as an air-rifle shot or louder causes some damage to our hearing apparatus. The louder and the more frequently this happens, the greater the long-term damage. When it comes to sporting performance, ear protection boosts concentration and prevents the disruption caused by instinctive reactions to sounds. Protect your hearing and you'll avoid noise stress and be able to shoot steadier.



The reaction of your barrel during a shot is a key quality marker for your stance. We have used a 50-metre SCATT to identify this movement (see red path on the right). For the reaction to be mapped in its entirety, your follow-through must last at least one second. With well-balanced and stable posture, your muzzle movement should appear as shown in the image: - The rifle first jumps in an almost perpendicular line up above the target centre. - It then drops away from the apex, tracing an arc to the open side of the stance down to the level of the target centre. - Next it swings back in toward the centre point and past it. - Finally, the path should come to a rest back at the starting point. The lower the barrel jumps, the more stable the stance. Ensuring your stock, butt plate and cheekpiece are correctly adjusted will also result in lower muzzle movement and therefore a more controlled shot. If you adopt the same approach each time you take up position, your gun should jump in a very similar way on each shot.



To allow the head to adopt a more comfortable position, the sighting line is raised up in the standing and kneeling positions. This makes sense as it relieves the strain on your neck and means your eyes can move as required with ease. Sight elevations of 3 – 5 centimetres are advisable depending on height and neck length. Shooters usually adopt the same height as they use for their air rifle, so that both stances benefit from identical conditions. When it comes to your balance in the standing position, it is beneficial when both eyes are at the same height and therefore in their natural position. It's also easier to monitor wind flags properly when your head is straight, since this basic alignment matches our sense of position. As well as raising up the sights, the position of the cheekpiece is also a key point of reference for head position. Shooters will usually spend a great deal of time experimenting and continuously making improvements until they get somewhere close to a satisfactory outcome. Your follow-through will tell you whether your cheekpiece is set correctly. Only when your eye falls right back into the sighting line after each shot, do you know that the adjustments you've made to the back of your stock are correct.



Once you have taken up position, the grip on your rifle must not come into contact with the left shoulder of your jacket. All the same, you should try to ensure your shoulder is pointing straight at the target. If it gets too close to your jacket, you should file your grip down on the inside, removing all material that doesn't come into contact with your hand. In the case of wooden grips, you can smooth the affected area with fine sandpaper to produce a very elegant solution. A 'slimmed-down' grip also helps you find the same hand position on each shot, because you can feel the edges straight away.

Shooting in the standing position with a small-calibre rifle is more demanding in terms of technique and tactics than when using an air rifle. Additional problems include: - The stronger recoil of the small-calibre cartridge and the louder noise, - More extreme lighting conditions and changes on the open-air ranges, - Greater temperature fluctuations, wind and changes in wind direction, - Changing range conditions (target height, arrows, shadows, ...) - Distractions from range neighbours (change-over). Normally, the bigger the range, the greater the difficulties. This is particularly true where wind is concerned – often a crucial factor at major international ranges, such as at London 2012.

However, certain rule changes have been introduced to mitigate somewhat against the increased technical and tactical demands facing small-calibre shooters: - The rifle can be heavier and longer, which reduces recoil. - The butt plate can incorporate a hook design and be adjusted in (almost) any way. - There are no restrictions as regards the longitudinal and height (relative to the barrel) position of the sighting line. - A hand support can be extended to any point below the stock and can be adjusted freely. - Additional weights and extensions are permitted on the barrel casing (sleeves). - A spirit level and/or artificial horizon can be added to the sights. - Spotting telescopes are permitted. Special outdoor aids are also used widely, such as polarising filters and coloured lenses that produce special contrast effects and chemical handwarmers. Shooters usually have 2 – 3 different butt plates and cheekpieces to hand for rapid change-overs between positions.



Even the hand support meets all demands in terms of variation and speed of change-over. The solid wooden piece can be reshaped as necessary, by rounding off edges or cutting in recesses for example. All you need are simple woodworking tools.



Some experienced shooters prefer to use faster ammunition in the standing position because the slightly bigger recoil plays to the character of this stance.



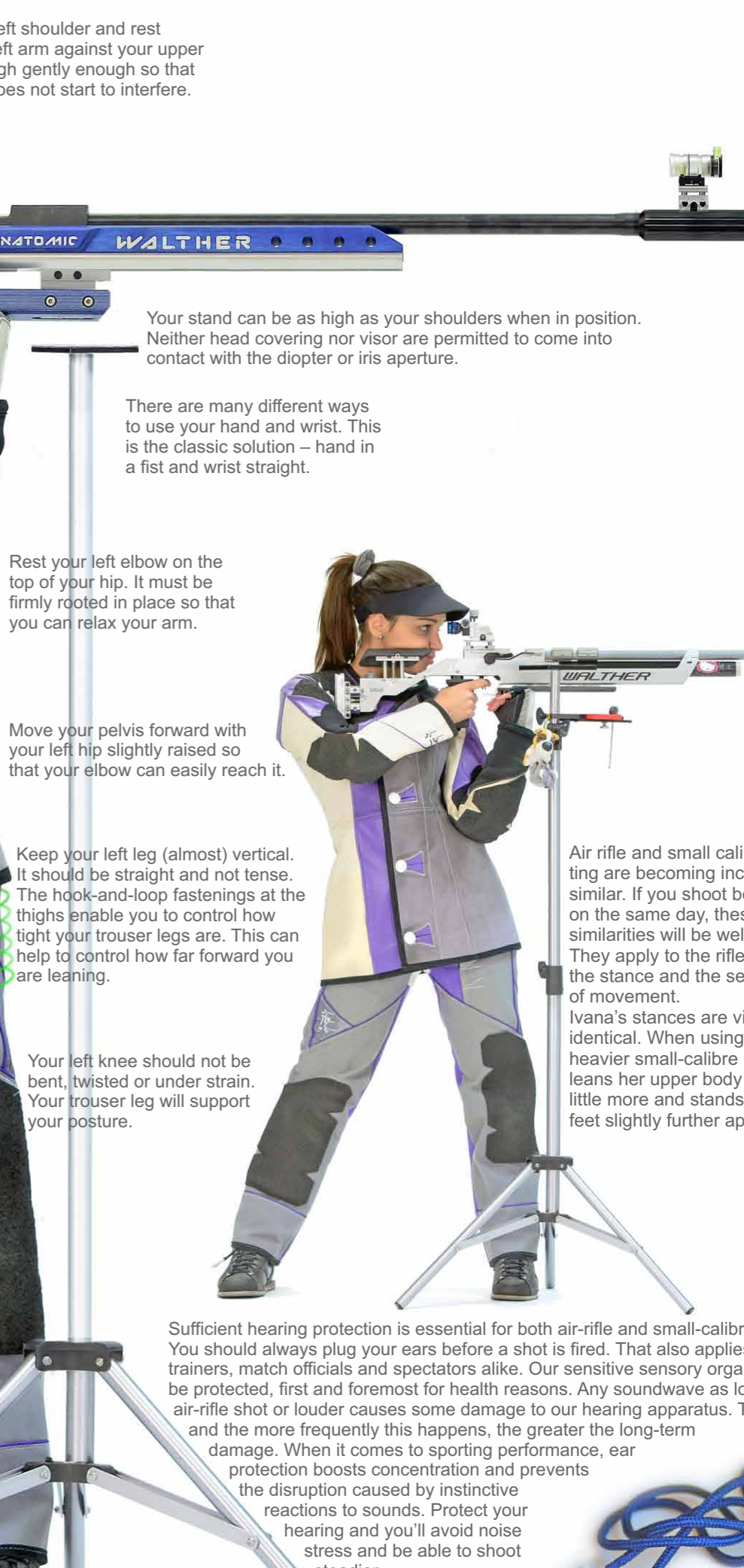
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