



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 from which to shoot. 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 the same 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 should be held in a relaxed position so that the muscles are not



under any undue tension or this can lead to unwanted instability. 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 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 the correct head/sight position can be achieved. The fore end then simply rests in the palm of the left hand which applies just enough rearward 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 your 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 when shooting 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 whilst conversely, having your foot tucked in under your knee (4) or putting all of the pressure



onto the ball of the foot will push your weight forward causing a balance problem. This often leads to a tendency to pull the front of the rifle downwards when releasing the shots. 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. Note: Placing the tip of your elbow directly on top of your knee will produce a pivot point making it virtually impossible for you to hold the rifle steady and should be avoided completely. Due to either physical problems or injuries, 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 sit 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 and the knees are placed around shoulder width apart which allows the body and head to remain 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 position, and although the head to scope alignment isn't perfect, it does produce some very good results for those that can achieve 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 drops down naturally by the side of the body. 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 for the shooter and again your physical size and flexibility will usually determine the most stable position that you can adopt, although some positions will only suit the semi auto type rifles. Once again, keeping the head in an upright position will help you retain a constant 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 of your feet flat on the ground. Placing just the heels on the ground will obviously 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, whichever magnification I am using at the time. The right leg is extended outwards over the top of the left foot to keep it grounded and help it act as a brace, and the right foot is turned over so that the flat edge provides a stable contact area on the ground to stop the ankle from rolling around. The left foot is planted flat on the ground and the left knee is raised so that the fore end of the rifle can rest on top of it. The left hand is cupped with the lower two fingers gripping the front of the knee, whilst the other two grip the fore end to make sure the rifle is held firmly in place. Leaning backwards slightly allows a good head/scope alignment and the right elbow drops down naturally under no tension by the side of the body. 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 rest either on the 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 that I have managed to find when shooting with a semi auto rifle (10) is to lift my knees up higher so that I can wrap my left forearm arm around my left knee. I then rest the rifle



between the 'v' shape that is created 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 right knee to give an even 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 on the top right, 6 weak shoulder at the bottom left target, then the final 6 from the strong shoulder on the bottom right target. This way there is no doubt about any shots you may think you 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 achieving a better head/scope alignment in that position or visually see any corrections you may need to give if you end up having to aim off slightly in the future. In the next issue I'll look at ways to speed up your loading and reloading technique along with how and where to place and carry ammunition for GR competitions.