

STRUCTURE & TECHNIQUE

[building and using the sitting position]

One of the main differences in my position and others you might see is that I cant the rifle. I let it lean outward, in the direction opposite what I use for the other positions. The reason I do this is to get my head in a natural position and keep my neck relaxed. Many people experience a group shift in sitting. This shift can occur gradually or quickly, but the shots will go out toward 2-o'clock. The reason for this shift is pressure placed against the stock in attempting to maintain an upright rifle and head. The head is moving toward a more natural position, which, for a right handed shooter, would be up and to the right towards 2-o'clock. As a result of the head displacement, the rear aperture starts slipping away toward 8-o'clock. This combines to cause subsequent shots to start landing higher and farther right on the target.

My sitting position might look contorted, but it's comfortable as can be. If I were to take my sitting position as it is and then try to move my head and the rifle upright it would most definitely be contorted, unbearably. With the body bending forward from the waist and angled as it is with respect to the target face, the natural orientation for the head is leaned, not straight. I want to have as upright a head position as is possible, but I'm not going to force anything to get more than I already have. Trying to keep a rifle upright is going opposite the forces maintaining the stability of the position. That's a bad combination, and not possible by my experience. It puts a kink in the neck that will attempt to straighten itself out, and that is the cause of the aperture and group shifts just mentioned,

and also discomfort. This problem can be easily fixed, and the fix is canting.

The amount of cant is whatever is necessary to align the eye with the rear aperture when the head is in a comfortable position on the stock. I'm not saying a bolt rifle shooter will be able to lay the full weight of his head on the stock, so there is always going to be some amount of tension in the neck if due only to the need to lift the head on and off the stock to operate the bolt. On the TUBB 2000 it's possible to operate the bolt with the face held against the cheekpiece, but it's not on any other manually operated gun. A T2K operator, or someone shooting a semi-automatic, can apply more face pressure against the stock which may mean he'll also be comfortable then with a little more cant, and possibly have a more effective position overall.

The only curve canting a rifle sitting throws is an event zero change. This is one of the primary concerns, if not the only concern, for those who shy away from incorporating this technique. There's nothing to worry about. Most shooters are going to have a different zero for sitting anyhow, and there's no difference in a different wind zero and a different elevation zero, and both together are nothing more than another reference that becomes the event zero. Dial it in and go on.

Other people worry about wind and elevation changes concurrently with a rifle that's leaned over, and that does happen. However, it takes quite a few clicks of wind to affect elevation, and that's what the sighters are for in the first place. Canting a

rifle that has otherwise upright sights doesn't cause nearly the effect that I experience. Keep in mind that my sights are not mounted level to the action; they are installed with a lean to the right so they'll be level for me in prone. Now I'm starting with a rifle sight that's mounted 17 degrees (currently) off toward the right and then leaning the rifle to the right approximately another 10 degrees, and I'm shooting clean after clean after clean with big x-counts. It is just not a concern. And, no, there is no level reference to ensure a consistent lean in sitting. The bubble on my rifle is also adjusted for prone and the sights are leaned too far over in my sitting position to use the crosshairs in the front sight element to any effect. I level the rifle from my position, and that is the effect of the consistency assisted by the cant. A natural head orientation will mean more natural orientation of the entire position, rifle attitude or level included. In talking with Service Rifle shooters who cant their rifles, I've learned it's easy

for them to determine a consistent amount of cant through sight picture by keying off the angle of the front post, but even if it changed from string to string, it wouldn't be much, and not enough to lose any points.

An effective, aggressive sitting position requires a good deal of sling tension and holding force. The contact points and body angles are not as good as they are for prone, and the shooter carries more burden of rifle weight as well. My sitting position is under a good deal of tension from the sling, and I have placed myself in a tight package, but it's not stressful. I couldn't sit there like that for an hour but it's plenty comfortable for many minutes longer than I'll fire from it in an event.

The back of my left arm, just above the elbow, goes on the left leg, not the knee. It contacts the shin area. The point of my left elbow isn't touching my leg. My right elbow nestles in the crook of my left knee, on the inside area of this crease.

I describe my leg orientation as "semi-



Canting is one of the key elements in my attaining a good shooting position. Outboard cant is a natural orientation for this shooting position to align the sights with the shooter's eye, and also takes strain off the shooter.