

# Some Tips for Shooting in the Creedmore position

BY RICHARD BLAYDEN

The “Creedmore position” is a freestyle shooting position used extensively in handgun metallic silhouette – it involves lying on your back with the gun rested against your leg to provide the stability and control necessary for long range precision shooting.

Go to any interstate, national or international handgun metallic silhouette competition and you will see almost every shooter using the Creedmore position for all freestyle matches. There are THREE very good reasons for such overwhelming use of the Creedmore position for the freestyle matches – they are COMFORT, STABILITY and Control, and RHYTHM.

Get that “CSR” combination right and you will be developing a consistent and effective “shooting process” – and a good and well executed process will always produce better results than a series of constantly changing and often random attempts to improve!

Let’s get started...

## COMFORT

It can be a bit confronting to suggest that the Creedmore position is actually “comfortable” given the twisting and contorting that some people go through trying to get the hang of it – but this is generally the result of not knowing the finer details of why it is like it is and how to do it properly.

Sure we have to recognize that there are some issues around fitness, body size and flexibility but these can all be overcome to some extent if you work on the details and tips in the following section on stability, and perhaps work on the fitness and flexibility bits during non-shooting time at home if you are keen enough.

So, sorry to be pedantic on details but there’s actually a lot going on in the Creedmore position and if it’s not spelt out, new shooters can waste several ‘shooting years’ trying to figure it out for themselves. So hold tight - here goes...



## STABILITY

The Creedmore position basically works as a stable platform for handgun metallic silhouette shooting because it is based on a configuration of triangles – and a triangle is one of the few geometric shapes that cannot be distorted without breaking the shape at one or more of the joints or stretching or bending two or more of the sides.

It all starts with the feet. The feet must be flat on the ground and generally no more than shoulder width apart. Point the heels slightly outwards and the toes slightly inwards. This forms a very stable triangular base on the ground from which everything else is built.



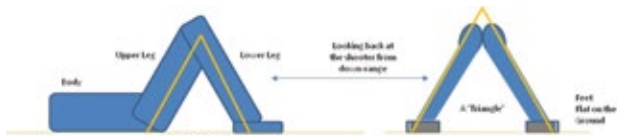
Notes on feet positioning:

- Some people spread their feet wider than shoulder width apart in attempt to rest the weight of the barrel of the gun on their leg instead of supporting it with the shooting hand / wrist. This is not necessary just the same as supporting the barrel is not necessary when shooting at the barricades in a service match.
- If your toes are pointed slightly inwards then your calf muscle will bulge slightly making a nice solid ‘barricade’ against which to steady your gun, thereby minimising the wobbles and shakes.
- Don’t be tempted to wear high-sided boots or similar under your

jeans so that you can rest the barrel on them – this is classed as an artificial support and will get you disqualified!

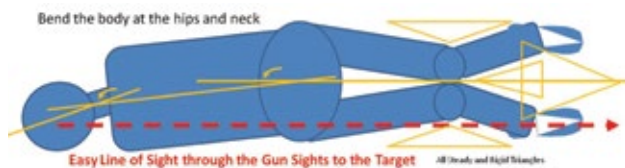
- If you spread your feet too wide you will probably be lifting the sides of your feet up so that you are balancing on the sides of your shoes – this is a very unstable position. Try it and have your spotter give your knees a shove sideways and watch them wobble around like a jellyfish on steroids.
- If your feet are spread wide your knees will be low and you will probably have difficulty in getting your sights high enough – especially for the centre-fire rams at uphill ranges like Toogoolawah (Qld).

**Next the knees.** Bring your feet towards your hips and press the knees gently and comfortably together – this will form two more triangles that are reinforced by the slightly triangular positioning of your feet flat on the ground.



These three triangles make for a nice steady and stable base to shoot from – but wait, there’s more!

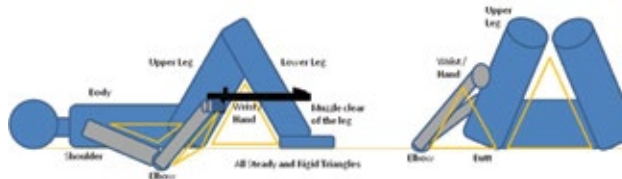
**Next the body.** If you lie in a straight line then you will have your knees (and possibly your beer gut) getting in the way of your view of the targets, so you need to bend your body in the direction of your shooting arm.



Notes on body positioning:

- By bending your body (hips, shoulders and neck) towards your shooting side you will get a clear view of your target (if you are a left-handed shooter you simply bend your body the other way), and;
- You will get more ‘arm length’ on that side to control the muzzle of the gun at safe distance past the front of your leg, and;
- You will get more arm length to form yet another supporting triangle between your elbow on the ground and your wrist (pulse point) against your thigh.
- You can then freely use your wrist and hand to hold, control and operate your gun most effectively without have to stretch your arm out straight and strain your arm or other body muscles unnecessarily.

**Now the right arm** (or left arm for left-handed shooters). Have your right elbow on the ground and pushed out from your body, and have your right (gun holding) hand pressed you against your thigh.



Notes on the left or right (shooting arm) position:

- The shooting arm also forms a number of triangles which work with the other triangles reinforce the overall steadiness of the Creedmore position.
- Some people wear elbow guards to protect their elbow from grating along the ground when the gun recoils, or simply to make the elbow contact with the ground (or shooting carpet) feel ‘softer’. I have never found this necessary. If you let your arm relax (thereby removing a source of wobble and strain in your sight picture) and don’t grip the gun too tight then it can recoil naturally in the vertical, lifting your elbow off the ground as it does so.
- Some people also wear a shooting glove – do what you feel most comfortable doing but don’t forget to cut the trigger finger off the glove or you will lose the feel and control of your trigger pull – and your trigger finger will still be cold when shooting in cold weather. Hands in your pockets until the last moment can be a better bet (especially if you have a charcoal hand warmer in there!).

Always make sure that:

- The muzzle of the gun is at a safe distance past your leg (use a bicycle clip to control the flapping of loose jeans / trousers legs to avoid setting fire to or shooting holes through them).
- You are comfortable (wear comfortable clothing – not too stiff, too loose or too tight), and;
- You have a clear and comfortable line of sight past the ‘lumps, bumps and protrusions’ of your body, through your sights and on to the target.

**Lastly the left arm** (the non-shooting arm that supports your head).



Notes on the left or right 'non-shooting' arm position:

- Your head supporting arm should also form rigid triangles for steadiness in your sight picture. Remember that having movement / wobble with your head while you are executing a shot is the same as trying to focus your sights on a moving target!!
- Adjust your body position and right and left arm positions to align your eyes, sights and preferred aim (sight picture) on each target. Your sight picture should be identical for all 10 of each bank of targets – stick to an identical sight picture and use your screw-driver to adjust the point of impact!
- Use an extension to your shooting hat to block out the bright sky above the targets (eg: most people have a cut-out plastic ice-cream container or similar clipped to the brim of a baseball cap to do this) – it allows you better focus on your sight picture by minimising background / overhead glare.
- For the ladies with long hair tied in a pony-tail either tie it high or to the left or right of your head so that the arm supporting your head is not resting on an unstable "ball" of hair (advice from my wife Ansie who no longer shoots but used to shoot well).

An extra tip.....

Try to ignore the irregular shapes of each target and imagine a simple black circle in the centre of each target instead. Make each circle your 'true' target and have your sights set to hit the centre of the circle with your most comfortable sight picture. Aiming at the imaginary circle will help tighten your grouping – adjust your sights to suit your preferred hold for rail, mid-leg or belly-line, etc. Try not to hit the rams on the centre of gravity – apart from having 'soft loads', that is the best way to 'ring' them - the best and biggest circle on the rams is towards the back foot.



- Remember that the legs of the chickens and turkeys are offset from the centre of the circle (that's why the chicken and turkey feet are offset from the leg) so 'leg' aim is not central on those targets.
- As you move from target to target, **move your whole line of sight**. Do not try to stretch or distort your comfortable position as that will just get worse as you progress through the set of five targets. Move your whole body (feet, hips and shoulders) for each shot to maintain good sight picture and bodily comfort – shot consistency!!

- You have to move anyway to reload each shot when using a single shot pistol. A big mistake with new shooters and revolvers is to re-cock the revolver with their shooting hand. Don't do that! Use your non-shooting (neck supporting) hand so that you can retain and/or reset a constant grip of the revolver. Some guns are grip sensitive and will only group well if you have an identical grip for each shot – you risk losing that consistency if you cock with your shooting hand alone.
- This moving between shots is important to maintain your Rhythm (see below).

## RHYTHM

Watch a good shooter in the Creedmore position (or any position for that matter) and you will notice a "Rhythm" in their shooting tempo – this is an important way to match the timing / rate of your five shots within the two minutes allowed and it is critical to the cycle of breathing and relaxing / focusing and control that you will need for consistent shooting.

Every shot routine should, as far as possible, be identical – a "repeatable shooting process":

- As you load and / or cock the gun with your non-shooting hand, make sure you are stretching out your neck and taking a couple of good deep breaths to re-oxygenate your eyes – even if it requires you to sit up a bit between shots. Don't do this and you will find your sight picture deteriorating as you progress through the five targets – two minutes is too long for your eyes to "hold their breath".
- Lie back in your Creedmore position and raise the gun to rest against your leg and point towards the target with your finger OFF the trigger and get comfortable.
- Take two steady deep breaths, expanding your chest and lowering your diaphragm, each time 'feeling' your back sinking into the ground as you exhale. Your whole body will become relaxed and well oxygenated. You can practice this bit when you go to bed at night – lie on your back with your knees raised and do this breathing exercise for a few minutes – bet you will feel comfortable and relaxed and will go to sleep quickly!
- As you breath out for the second (or third if you like) time, start to sharpen your focus on the sight picture (the front sight especially) in front of the target, bring your trigger finger to the trigger and start squeezing as soon as you are ready. Ideally, this stage of the process should take no more than four to eight seconds – beyond that your sight picture will start to deteriorate and worry and wobble will creep in and start to destroy what could have been a good shot. Watch some of the top shooters here – their "match discipline" will creep in after a few too many seconds, they will abandon the shot and re-start their entire shooting process for that target from scratch.

- Don't over grip the gun, stay focused on the front sight right through the trigger pull and let the gun recoil naturally up and away from your sight picture. Enjoy the 'good hit' even though you didn't actually see it - then repeat the whole rhythmic process for the next shot and so on.
  - Your rhythm should suit firing six shots in the two minutes allowed so that you have time to cope with misfires and sight adjustments where necessary (as advised by your spotter) – and you will have time to apply the “match discipline” of abandoning what is likely to be a bad shot and re-starting the shooting process for that shot.
  - If you have to adjust your sights, sit up and do it properly rather than continuing to lie down and fumble and lose count of the clicks, or worse still, turn the sights the wrong way – and all the while wasting valuable shooting time! Sit up, be quick and correct and make note of sight changes so that you can change them back if wrong and you can re-set the gun for the next bank of targets or the next full match that you shoot with it.
- A good and well executed shooting process will always deliver the best results for any shooter's capability – far more so than a series of constantly and often randomly changing attempts to improve.

Hope it all makes sense and helps you enjoy the fun sport of Silhouette shooting, have fun. ◆

## In Summary

Get your RHYTHM right and your shooting will improve because you are developing a consistent and reliable “shooting process”

- Get your COMFORT right and your shooting process will improve
  - Get your STABILITY (triangles) right and your shooting process will improve
  - Use the Creedmore position to do it all together (with the help of a like minded spotter) and everything will improve quicker.
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