

Proper sighting needed for accuracy

by ARNOLD OLSON
Staff reporter

The instant a bullet leaves the rifle's muzzle, it's falling.

If it were fired from a level position and at the same instant a bullet was dropped from the muzzle, both bullets would hit the ground at the same time.

It's basic high school physics, but a lot of shooters forget that point.

That's why sights are aligned so firearms shoot upwards, cutting the horizontal line of sight a few yards from the muzzle and then again at target range.

A rifle that's bang-on at 100 yards will shoot low at 200 yards and fantastically-low, by comparison, at 300 yards.

This is one reason a .30-30 isn't recommended for long-range hunting, because it has what shooters refer to as a trajectory like a rainbow.

It's also the reason many hunters sight in so their rifle hits as much as three inches high at 100 yards — so it will hit only three to five inches low at 200 yards. That spread will still allow a kill shot when aiming at the heart-lung area.

The Prince George Rod and Gun Club allows non-members to use the range in off hours, at \$5 a session. (Three such payments within the year are applicable to membership fees, in case you get bitten by the shooting bug.)

Just before hunting, the club usually holds a special sighting-in clinic, at a lower fee, to encourage hunters to use accurate rifles.

When you go out to sight in your rifle, whether to the gun club or to some other secluded and safe area, take all the tools you'll need: special wrenches, screw drivers, small hammer



Herb Sorer, left, sights in his .30-06 Remington while Bill Campbell lets go a round from his .223 Ruger in preparation for this year's hunting season.

and punch.

The hammer and punch might be needed if the front sight has been knocked out of alignment. The other tools might be used to secure a scope or to move its sighting apparatus.

When sighting in, remember that if the rifle is rested on a solid foundation, the jump from recoil will make the rifle shoot high — it's the only direction for the energy to go.

Use some sort of padding to allow the rifle's recoil to be dissipated equally in all directions, yet still

A small pair of deer horns are all you need for rattling for deer or elk. Beat them against each other or try rattling a couple of dead sticks against trees (a three or four-metre-high evergreen works well). This isn't usually effective much past mid-October, however.

hold the rifle in place. A blanket to protect the rifle's finish isn't a bad idea.

Good rifle sights are made so the rear sight can be aligned both sideways and vertically. Front sights are locked in place. Don't move them unless the sight has been knocked out of place.

Most scopes have caps over alignment screws (often referred to as windage and elevation) but some

small bore rifle scopes leave the adjustments available for immediate field changes.

Bolt-action rifles allow the shooter to bore-sight his weapon.

With the rifle held firmly in position and the bolt out, the rifle bore is aimed at the target. Once it has been centred, the sights are brought into rough alignment.

The bolt is replaced and a shot or two fired. The sights or

scope are then changed to put the rifle on-target.

The best place to get instructions for sighting in is the information pamphlet that comes with the rifle or scope. Some screw adjustments are clockwise for right-hand movement, but not all are. The number of clicks per inch on the target varies from scope to scope. This information will save time and bullets.

Once the direction of movement has been determined, sighting is relatively simple.

If you can find out where the bullet you're using first crosses the line-of-sight, you can set up at that distance and save yourself a long walk. Using 25 to 30 yards will be close for most .30 calibre rifles.

• Shoot one shot.
• Keeping the rifle held firmly in place and aimed at the tar-

get point, move the elevation and windage adjustments so they line up with the bullet hole. This will mean you are now aiming the sights where the rifle is shooting.

• The other method is to measure the distance the bullet is out, both vertically and horizontally and move the adjustments the desired number of clicks.

• Whichever method is used, shoot another round.

• Make any minor adjustments and shoot another round.

You should be on target.

If you've used the shorter range, shoot three more shots at 100 yards to see how the rifle is grouping, or to get the elevation you want — no sideways variation should be expected.

If you're a new shooter, you might have to shoot several rounds for each of the above steps, to get a group or area of hitting. If so, be fair to the animals you're hunting and practise shooting before hitting the field.

Off a rest, with a scope, you should print shots no more than two inches apart at 100 yards. With iron sights you shouldn't be further than six inches apart.

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