



20 ADVICES TO BETTER YOUR MARKSMANSHIP

ABSTRACT

Many people spend years to learn how to shoot accurately. They learn only at their own mistakes and it takes long time. Some even give up. These 20 advices will help you to speed up your marksmanship progress. There is one important condition though: you should practice these advices.

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I don't want to waste your time and repeat any copybook maxims. But even before you start practicing please remember to treat any firearm as if it is loaded and do as you were trained at your firearm safety trainings. Never jeopardize safety!

1. First and the foremost – Practice! Shoot at least 2,000 cartridges annually. If it is expensive, use .22 LR for training. The critical minimum is 500-700 rounds per year. Otherwise you cannot progress and even lose qualification.
2. Stress and adrenaline are massive enemies of your shooting accuracy. To overcome them, take part in shooting contests: each contest is a stress for you (and you learn how to cope with it in controlled conditions). The more you do – the quicker you will progress.
3. Take lessons from a professional instructor. First define your goal (say, hunting or target shooting) and find an appropriate instructor. Such lessons may save you months of your time.
4. Work out your shooting positions in front of a mirror to the last detail. Practice to take each position slowly but fluent. If you learn how to do it slowly (but correct!), you will always be able to speed up.
5. Don't aim for too long. Pull the trigger as soon as you see the target in the crosshairs.
6. Prepare before each shot whenever possible.
7. Dry fire exercises (of course, if your firearm permits dry firing). Make sure that your trigger pull doesn't affect the positioning of the barrel (focus on the front sight's position – it should not move). It is easier with long guns (since a long gun is fixated between your weak hand and your shoulder) and harder with pistols. A good exercise for a handgun is a **penny drill**. You aim your handgun in the safe direction. Your friend puts a coin on the front sight of your handgun. You should be able to dry fire your handgun and not have the penny fall off.
8. Skeet shooting. Lots of fun plus priceless experience. To make it harder you may use a tactical shotgun.
9. Analyze each shot when possible. The more you do that – the quicker you progress. Each good shooter learns to identify mistakes: incorrect aiming, thumbing, anticipating recoil etc. Your result in any kind of activity is proportional to the level of your awareness. Shooting is not an exception.
10. Use lightweight handguns for practicing: they don't mask even minor mistakes related to trigger control.



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11. Vision is important. And I don't mean that you get your eyes examined regular. This goes without saying. What is important is your ability to find the target and track it. For example, when you are going for a walk, you may focus on some pigeon or a crow, following the bird with your eyes.
12. You must be strong enough to not notice the weight of your weapon. And working out in gym is not exactly what's needed. A good exercise: pick up a heavy object (say, an iron), take a shooting position pretending that's a pistol, and hold it as long as possible.
13. You should be able to see your target perfectly. And this also requires some practice. Set a target at a distance that you can comfortably see not just the bullseye but the whole target with all of its markings. Next day slightly increase the distance. And so on. After such a drill you will be able to see the target clearer and better.
14. Breathe properly. Before a shot breathe evenly, make a slightly deeper breath and gently (not hard!) exhale. While exhaling you should pull the trigger.
15. Different cartridges work differently (I mean with more or less precision) in different firearms. Experiment with different ammo to see what gives you best results. Then – stick to just this kind of ammunition.
16. Trembling of your hands is a huge problem! Possible reasons include adrenaline, caffeine, stress, excitation. Everybody has to find his own ways of fighting with these problems. For example, physical exercise (like push-ups or squats, when nobody can see you) will burn excessive adrenaline, breathing exercises and meditation will help to reduce stress or excitation. Avoid alcohol and caffeine (especially green tea) before shooting.
17. Clean your gun after each use. So, don't be lazy. Cleaning and servicing firearms is important not only for their longevity, but also for accuracy.
18. Practice at certain distance till your grouping satisfies you. Only then move your target further. Even if your goal is accuracy at longer distances, start from a shorter one.
19. Couple more things – balance and relaxed muscles. If you are tensed or not in a perfectly balanced position, your accuracy is jeopardized. A good exercise to better control these aspects. Several times a day, while you are doing your normal activities, you say: "Stop!" and you freeze. During this freeze you scan each of your limbs and muscles. And then you relax each rigid muscle.
20. Your gun is way more accurate than you. Provided that, of course, it is in good condition. So, make sure that it is, and apply to a gunsmith if needed. Workmanlike condition of your firearm is a must for any shooting practice. It also may save you tons of efforts.