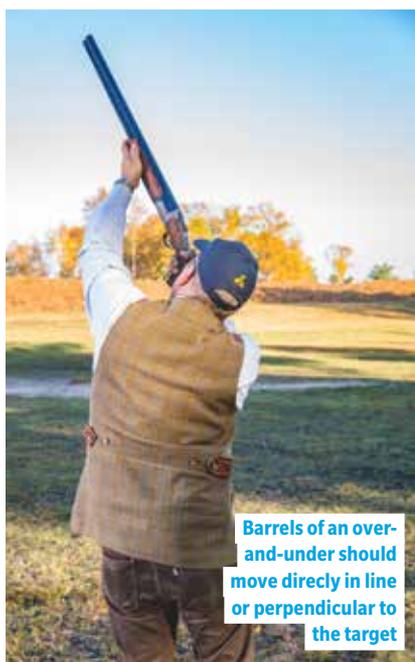


Shoulders and your shooting

Have you ever thought about using your shoulders when you're tracking a target and, if so, how that could be of benefit to you, asks **Tony Bracci**

Using your shoulders when swinging your shotgun can make you very aware of the line your target is travelling on. To that effect, it makes us more efficient. As we should all know, shotguns are designed to shoot their payload 60%-70% above the barrel. So, if the barrels are canted off line the shot will also be off to one side. As a guide, the barrels of an over-and-under should move directly in line with the target or perpendicular to the target.



Barrels of an over-and-under should move directly in line or perpendicular to the target

Top tips

- Drop your shoulder to correspond with the direction of the target.
- Keep the barrels of an over-and-under shotgun perpendicular to the target.
- Even driven targets often curl to the left or right, so don't be afraid to roll your shoulders for those.

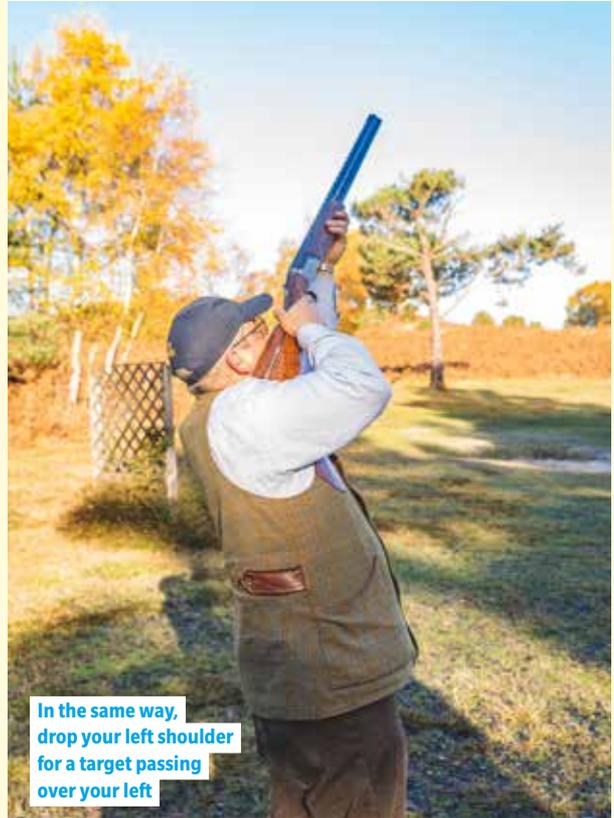


CROSSING TARGET

Now let's think about using your shoulder when dealing with a crossing target. We will look at this as a right-handed shooter. Shooting a left to right target is all well and good if it is perfectly horizontal. What if the target is climbing? This is when we can use our shoulders to keep the barrels perpendicular to the target. By dropping your left shoulder, you will keep the barrels 90° to the target. This will be the same if you had a right to left climbing target, but you would drop the right shoulder to keep the barrels perpendicular. This will help you get the right line and read your target more effectively.



Drop your right shoulder for a target passing over your right shoulder



In the same way, drop your left shoulder for a target passing over your left

ADJUSTMENTS

If you make a small adjustment to your shoulders – dropping your right shoulder for a driven target over your right shoulder, and dropping your left shoulder for a driven target going over your left shoulder – this would keep your barrels

in line with the target and give you better kills with your pattern central to the target. This technique works well with targets 10-15° off centre line, depending how flexible you are. This also can help shooting curling game birds, as you will

find yourself dropping a shoulder to keep the line as the bird curls in the wind. Remember, as the target gets closer the angles increase, so subtle angles above your head or slightly more angle, but out in front.



Driven targets often curl so don't be afraid to roll with it



Here Tony takes a driven bird curling to the left

STRAIGHT DRIVEN TARGET

Let's think about a straight driven target. I hope you would be happy that the barrels move perfectly in line with the target to get to your chosen kill point. But what if the driven target isn't dead straight? If it goes over your left or right shoulder? Without any adjustment the barrels twist off the line and you end up shooting up the side of the target, as the bottom barrel tries to overtake the top barrel.

Thanks to Bisley Shooting Ground for its help with this article.
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