

Fundamentals Highlight: Trigger Press Follow Through

By Matt Alexander

Trigger press follow-through is a critical aspect of precision rifle shooting, often distinguishing skilled marksmen from novices. It involves maintaining the pressure on the trigger after the shot has been fired, ensuring that the rifle's movement and shooter's actions remain consistent and controlled. This technique is essential for several reasons, impacting both the immediate shot accuracy and the shooter's overall performance.

Firstly, follow-through aids in maintaining proper sight alignment and sight picture until the bullet exits the barrel. In precision shooting, even the slightest movement can alter the bullet's trajectory, leading to deviation of the bullet. By continuing to apply consistent pressure on the trigger, the shooter minimizes any unintended movements that could occur at the moment of firing. This stability ensures that the rifle remains in the correct position throughout the entire firing process, allowing the bullet to travel the intended path.

Moreover, follow-through enhances the shooter's ability to diagnose and correct errors. When a shooter maintains focus and control after the shot, they can better observe the rifle's behavior and the shot's impact point. This observation period is crucial for analyzing any deviations from the expected result. For instance, a shooter can determine if their position, grip, or breathing affected the shot, thereby allowing them to make necessary adjustments for subsequent shots. This feedback loop is vital for continuous improvement in precision shooting. Learning to "call your shot" is critical to figuring out if shot deviation is human (fundamentals inconsistency) or if mechanical corrections are required.

Additionally, consistent follow-through cultivates a disciplined shooting routine. Precision shooting demands a high level of consistency and repeatability. By ingraining the habit of proper follow-through, shooters develop a more methodical and disciplined approach to each shot. This routine helps in building muscle memory, where the shooter's body learns to automatically perform the correct actions with minimal conscious effort. Over time, this leads to more reliable and predictable shooting performance.

Another important aspect is the mental focus that follow-through encourages. Precision shooting is as much a mental game as it is a physical one. Maintaining follow-through requires the shooter to stay mentally engaged with the shot process from beginning to end. This sustained focus helps in avoiding premature relaxation or distraction that can occur immediately after the shot, ensuring that the shooter's concentration is unbroken throughout the shooting sequence.

In conclusion, trigger press follow-through is a fundamental component of precision rifle shooting that significantly enhances shot accuracy, error diagnosis, shooting discipline, and mental focus. By mastering this technique, shooters can achieve greater consistency and reliability in their performance, ultimately leading to more successful outcomes on the range or in competitive settings. Thus, investing time and effort in developing proper follow-through is indispensable for anyone serious about excelling in precision rifle shooting. Next time you are behind the rifle, focus on this one element of fundamentals to improve your consistency.