

Learning Field Target

“DECIDE.
COMMIT.
SUCCEED.”

This is my story and what worked for me, hopefully it can help other FT shooters as well.

Where did it all start?

Before we get to where I am now we have to start at the beginning. I was never interested in any sport but that all changed when I discovered Field Target. I started with SFT (Sporter Field Target) first. I started with only mildots and 12 magnification when shooting and later moved to using a click chart. This journey has been a roller coaster with many ups and downs.

My first time competing at Nationals we travelled all the way to the Cape. I still competed under SFT and my nerves definitely got the better of me then but that too was a great learning experience. We had to make some adjustments to my gun because of the change of altitude. We arrived at the shooting range that was made available and my Dad and I tried to work it out. This was still all very new to us. Then uncle Wian Strydom arrived and offered to help, he helped us set up and get everything ready for me before even starting with his own.

**DREAMS
+
WORK
=**
SUCCESS

I did not do as well as I wanted at the Nationals, and that is where I decided that I am going to give this my all and hopefully one day get to wear that Protea jacket. I decided that I am going to practice more and learn as much as I can. In the Cape I realized that the big scary “oom” that helped me was actually not that scary.

This is my method on how I improved myself:

I started by learning all the rules and regulations, I even asked to write the RO test. I did not pass on my first time but I did not give up until I passed. I am not allowed to RO as I am not old enough but I did the test to prove to myself that I know the rules and I am confident now to query something if I feel it does not adhere to the rules during a competition.

I learned about the setup of my rifle, I think I drove some people crazy with all my questions, sometimes I did not understand what they explained but they kept explaining until I understood. Now I can adjust my rifle myself and I am more confident in my equipment and that if I do run into a problem I know what to do and adjust it.

Get a routine that works for you and keep to it. Practice it at home. For example, I sit down, load my pellet, range, check my click chart adjust to the correct clicks. Aim, make sure I am level and not tilting my rifle, check the wind and then pull the trigger. Make sure to follow through and see if you can see where you hit the target. Remember to dial back to zero!! This is one of the easiest mistakes to make 😊😊

“BUILD
GOOD
HABITS.”

A LITTLE
PROGRESS
EACH DAY
ADDS UP
TO BIG RESULTS

Get your general direction correct. When you sit down, your time starts and if you are already in the correct general direction of the target it helps a lot. I still remember how much time I wasted just finding the target. Make sure that when you sit down you are already aiming in the correct direction. If you still can't find the target reduce your magnification. Just remember to change it back to the correct magnification when ranging so that you get the correct distance of your target. Spend time on setting up your rifle. Ask for help if you need to. There are many more experienced shooters that will be more than willing to give advice on how to set it up and even offer their help. The time you spend in setting up your rifle will pay off.

Practice controlling your breathing; don't hold your breath when shooting. Practice this even at home with just your rifle in your hand; you don't need to be shooting to do this.

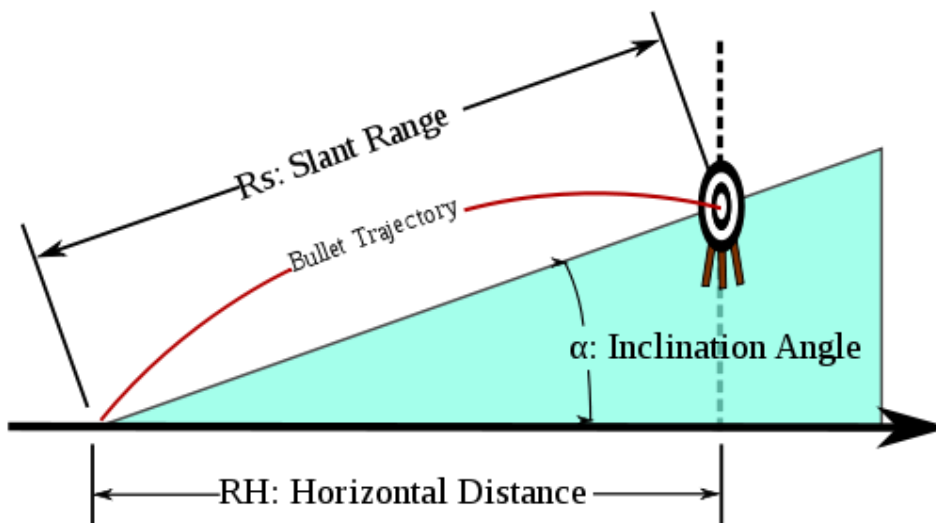
Learn how to read the wind. Use your wind indicator and your surroundings, they are showing you what the wind is doing. I use the 1358 wind guide that Uncle Mark posted. Just learn your time tables otherwise you take too long and might run out of time. This is one of those things that you get better at with time and practice.

HARD
WORK
PAYS
OFF

Learning an angle shot can be hard to do until you understand the trajectory of your pellet. You can use the rifleman's rule. Below is a quick explanation but do some research on it to understand it more. We often get angle shots and you need to know how to adjust your aim, otherwise you will miss out on a lot of points.

Rifleman's rule is a "rule of thumb" that allows a rifleman to accurately fire a rifle that has been calibrated for horizontal targets at uphill or downhill targets. The rule says that only the horizontal range should be considered when adjusting a sight or performing hold-over in order to account for bullet drop. Typically, the range of an elevated target is considered in terms of the *slant range*, incorporating both the *horizontal distance* and the *elevation distance* (possibly negative, i.e. downhill)

The *Rifleman's rule* provides an estimate of the horizontal range for engaging a target at a known slant range (the uphill or downhill distance from the rifle). For a bullet to strike a target at a slant range and an incline of α , the rifle sight must be adjusted as if the shooter were aiming at a horizontal target at a range of . The figure below illustrates the shooting scenario. The rule holds for inclined and declined shooting (all angles measured with respect to horizontal). Very precise computer modeling and empirical evidence suggests that the rule does appear to work with reasonable accuracy in air and with both bullets and arrows



NEVER
GIVE UP
Because
GREAT THINGS
TAKE TIME

Make sure your rifle is level before pulling the trigger. You can miss your target completely if you are not level and this is something very basic we all forget to do sometimes. When pulling the trigger make sure you don't twitch, I try and always use the 2 second rule. I practiced this at home as part of my routine. So basically the two second rule is that when you pull the trigger you hold it for two seconds. Don't lift your head from your scope immediately after pulling the trigger, follow through and see if you can see where you hit the target. If you missed you can clearly see where you hit the target, you can then make a judgement call on what you did wrong and try to correct it with your next target.

Most of us don't have the opportunity to practice physically shooting at targets as we live in suburbs. We have a paper target against a door in the hallway and I practice my routine and my positionals on this. I have included the target we use.

**BE STUBBORN
ABOUT YOUR GOALS,
BUT FLEXIBLE ABOUT
YOUR METHODS.**
HPLYRIKZ.COM



Apart from all the practice you need with your rifle you also need to learn how to control your emotions and to stay focused during a league. This I think is almost the hardest part of Field Target. When you get a bad day don't just give up and lose focus. As I was once told by very wise more experienced shooters, focus on one target at a time, don't keep score and don't get discouraged if you have missed a few.



I asked to shoot with different shooting partners. Most of the more experienced shooters are more than willing to help other shooters to improve themselves. Try shooting with different shooters every time, you are most likely to learn something new every time. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Try what they are teaching you; if it doesn't work, rather than giving up on the method, try editing it. You may be surprised at what works for you. When you shoot with a more experienced shooter ask them to help you and look if they see that you do something that you can improve on especially on your positionals. I have improved my positionals tremendously and that helps you a lot in getting your scores up. To get your scores into the 40's you will have to work on your positionals. Ask how they read the wind, what do they do to adjust for it. The more you ask the more you know and you can improve yourself.

Even the most experienced shooters started at the bottom. All shooters struggle at some point and some even considered giving up, I sure was one of them. The most important thing to remember is that nothing comes easy and it takes time and hard work to make a success. Your scores might not start all that great but don't give up. Keep working hard and you will get there. Keep your head up even on bad days.

I go to the Protea developmental day every year and I learn a lot from all of the Proteas. It is definitely worth going to this even when you are doing well. You can always learn more and sometimes the smallest little thing that you learn can have a huge effect on your scores.

Winners
are not people who
never fail,
but people who
never quit

Make practice fun. We enjoy "follow me". You and at least one more shooter can play this game. You take turns on shooting at the same target. The shooter that is closer to the center gets the point. Keep score and sees who got the better score that day.

Before a competition I go to the more experienced shooters and ask if I can shoot with them and they are always more than willing to. If you don't feel comfortable with that then ask the admin when you are entering to please place you with an experienced shooter. Don't be afraid to ask questions and if you don't understand what they are explaining then tell them; don't keep quiet and make as if you understand.

I have received so many tips from all the more experienced shooters and I took them all and worked out what works for me. I still make silly mistakes and lose focus on some days but you have to learn how to cope with even the bad days. I personally need a bit of tough love some days, if things start to go downhill for me I sometimes almost just want to give up and then I lose focus. Last year I got a little pep talk after one of my bad days and was told that I must just focus on the target in front of me. Learn from your mistakes and if you miss, that is okay - just remember what you have learned and make sure that you make the next target fall. Don't lose the fun of Field Target by being too hard on yourself if you had a bad day.

~~SHOULD.~~
~~WOULD.~~
~~COULD.~~
DID.

I would like to thank everybody that helped me on my Field Target journey and help me achieve what I did; I could not do this on my own. I am not the most experienced shooter but I am more than willing to share what I know and help where I can. Please chat with me if I can help in any way, I will and if I can't we will find someone that can.

— IF THE —
Plan
DOESN'T
WORK
• CHANGE THE PLAN •
BUT NEVER THE
GOAL
GETTHEHEALTHYUJ

DON'T
QUIT

I can't wait until we are allowed to compete again and I can see my Field Target family.

I miss you all.

Zero/Group test

