

DID YOU MISS  
BECAUSE YOU HAD  
THE WRONG LOAD,  
CHOKER OR LEAD?  
...OR WAS IT

# KERATOCORNJUNCTIVITIS SICCA!

## ASKS DAVE HOLMES

Sounds a lot cooler than the conventional excuses – especially since most of your buddies will have no idea what the heck you’re talking about. If you want to cut them a little slack, you can tell them it’s dry eye syndrome. It can make a difference on your score card.

On the Saturday of the recent Gamaliel Cup Main Event, Bill McGuire dropped nine targets on 15 stations. Five of those were on his first station! The reason for the misses had nothing to do with tough targets. McGuire sensed something was going on with his eyes, put some drops in and only missed four targets on the next fourteen stations. Yeah, it can make that much difference. On Sunday, he followed up with a 95.

Dry eye simply impairs our ability to focus. If we can’t see ‘em good, we aren’t gonna hit ‘em good. It’s that simple. And it is so simple to treat that we’re silly not to do it.

I had the point brought home a couple days after I started wearing a new prescription. The new lenses seemed fine until I was sitting in the house one night and couldn’t read a thing on the TV screen unless I looked through the lower left or right part of my eye. The middle was muddled. I called my optometrist the next day and bounced the situation off him. His response led to a “Duh!” moment for me. When I expressed my doubt about the new prescription, he said I needed to remember that we had found three “stops” difference in my eyes after he put in drops. I honestly didn’t remember that conversation – but headed for a bottle of drops I had sitting around the house that I didn’t think I would ever need. A few drops, a few minutes later and the new prescription worked much better.



SOME DAYS THEY LOOK LIKE  
FUZZY GNATS. SOME DAYS  
THEY LOOK LIKE GARBAGE  
CAN LIDS. FOR THOSE  
EXPERIENCING DRY EYE  
SYNDROME, THOSE “FUZZY  
DAYS” MAY BE MUCH LESS  
FREQUENT IF WE HAVE SENSE  
ENOUGH TO TREAT THE EYES  
WITH A LITTLE TLC.

Tears seem pretty simple – slightly salty water drops that gush from our eyes when we drop the last pair! There's a lot going on in those little drops.

There are three layers to normal tears: an outer lipid layer, a middle watery layer and an inner mucous layer. There are different proteins in the different layers. The different layers are secreted by different glands around the eye and distributed by blinking. The triple combination helps facilitate spreading and retaining the fluid to hydrate the eyes. The lubrication is essential for visual acuity. That visual acuity is essential in shooting – just as our chokes, loads, guns and technique.

A quick look at the causes of dry eye syndrome is quite telling – revealing how many of us are candidates for the problem. Age is a contributor and there ain't any of us getting younger. Add to that: disease (I was comforted to find my RA at the head of the list), air conditioning, heating, antihistamines, antidepressants, some blood pressure medications, birth control pills, dry



**WE SPEND LOTS OF MONEY ON SHELLS, GLASSES, CHOKE TUBES, LESSONS AND PRACTICE. BUT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SHOOTING DAY, WHEN IT COMES TO ADDING A FEW Xs TO THE SCORE CARD, SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS A BOTTLE OF EYE DROPS MAY HELP.**

climate, long exposure to computer screens during the work day, contact lenses and a host of others. The only logical conclusion is that dry eyes syndrome can be a bit of an issue for most of us – some of the time.

So the next time you are at the range and those targets seem just a little fuzzy, it might be wise to try some eye drops. There is a wide selection of commercial products available with mostly similar ingredients. However, a perusal of the labels will show some variance with ingredients and that may make a difference to you. I've tried several brands and find a formula with glycerin to be the most comforting. Your mileage may vary.

The next time you are packing the shooting bag if you're over forty, it could be wise to add a bottle of eye drops to the mix. They don't cost much and they don't hurt a thing. It's a pretty low risk venture, but the next time you're on the range and those targets just aren't sharp, you may find that little bottle worth its weight in clay dust! ■