



PEOPLE LEARN IN DIFFERENT WAYS. A WHOLE LOT OF TIME, ENERGY AND MONEY HAS BEEN SPENT OVER THE YEARS TO FIGURE THIS OUT. MORE THAN ONE PHD HAS BASED HIS OR HER DISSERTATION (AND CAREER) ON THIS SUBJECT – BUT IF YOU’RE A PARENT, I’M PREACHING TO THE CHOIR.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

SAYS DANA FARRELL

You are probably already aware that some kids learn best by seeing, some by hearing and some must actually experience things first hand in order for a concept to sink in. Adults are no different – learning is a complicated thing. While some people can process information easily by hearing it, some need visual aids to effectively absorb and put it to use. It all depends on the individual student and his or her own learning abilities and internal processing method.

Thankfully for the sporting clays student we have digital video technology. Video recording, and a good software program to go with it, allows us to capture a student’s shotgun stroke and scrutinize it on a computer screen with the added capability to slow it down, compare sequences with a split screen, draw reference lines and more. Video doesn’t lie. Watching a recording of ourselves can be

extremely enlightening and the experience of seeing our shooting move can help trip a learning switch that otherwise might be difficult to trigger.

On Screen

Pat Lieske offers video recording as a teaching tool at his School of

Shooting – so I wondered what it could do for me. After taking lessons with Pat for awhile I was ready to give it a whirl, but frankly was a little skeptical about whether the video thing would actually pay off in my case. What, I wondered, could seeing a video of myself shoot possibly do for me? In my lessons to that point, Lieske had

been helping me work on a good, short move to the target, trying to eliminate bad habits that a mid-level shooter can bring to the game. What I saw when I watched myself shoot was a personal revelation of sorts – and I walked away with a new appreciation for video recording as a shotgun teaching tool.



BAD GUN MOUNT ON CROSSING TARGET X
 MOVE TO THE SHOULDER AND START OF SWING ARE NOT JOINED UP. DIPPING OR LIFTING OF BARREL DURING THE SWING MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO FIND THE TARGET LINE.



GOOD GUN MOUNT ON CROSSING TARGET ✓

Lieske had assured me (repeatedly) that my gun mount was lacking and although intellectually I knew what he was talking about, until I saw it for myself on the computer screen it just didn't quite sink in. When I asked what he feels video recording brings to the teaching experience Lieske said "Seeing is believing. You can talk about it all you want, but until you see yourself doing it... that's the key".

And see it I did. Would it have sunk in if I hadn't worked for weeks with Pat beforehand? Maybe not. I think I needed to work through the problem in a progressive, step by step way – and when I finally saw it on the monitor in living color, the timing was right for me to be able to process the information. I still may not yet be able to perform my gun mount perfectly every time, but I now have a better understanding of what I need to work on – which for me is a huge step forward.

I learned that recording a shooter's move is more for the student than the instructor, which is what Lieske told me when I asked him if he, with his

trained eye, was able to see things on video that he wouldn't catch with the naked eye. "There's certainly a potential for that, but generally, when I'm using video it's for someone that I'm not able to convey my thoughts to (as to what they're doing wrong) but I know they will understand it if I can show it to them. More often than not, that's the case."

Shoulder Rolling

A range of issues can be addressed using video, such as mounting the gun too early and not blending it into the move. "Another good

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BAD MOVE ON ARCHING TARGET ✗

TRACKING AN ARCHING TARGET LEADS TO ROLLING THE SHOULDERS.

example of the benefits of video is to show the problem of rolling the shoulder when shooting arching targets – you can tell students that they're rolling their shoulder, but they continue to do it," says Lieske, "but once they see the video they understand and correct the fault quite quickly". The problem is that today's tilting traps allow target setters the opportunity to throw curling and looping targets, and Lieske sees a lot of students who tend to follow the ever changing arc of the target when moving on them. Instead of choosing a breakpoint and making a good, economical move to it, many shooters will track the bird and end up rolling their shoulder as a result.

Lieske likes to break this target by choosing a breakpoint (whether it's where the bird is rising, leveling off or descending) and sticking to it. He says set your hold point where you can make a short but unrushed move to the breakpoint and you won't find yourself falling into the "tracking" problem. His technique for these targets is really no different than most other presentations, but the tendency for beginning and mid-level shooters to roll their shoulder on them is one scenario that video can help bring to light.



GOOD MOVE ON ARCHING TARGET ✓

Other Issues

Today's software set-up can do a multitude of tasks, including drawing lines on the video frames. "You can see where your gun hold is at the start and where you finish up and it'll actually trace the line that the gun barrel moves on, to see if you're dipping the barrel when

you're mounting the gun – or if you're lifting the gun up above the line and then trying to come back onto the line. It will clearly show if you have a gun fit issue or if you're lifting your head. "You can show it frame by frame, slow motion or real speed," says Lieske, "it's a great training aid." Students can ask for a digital copy of the recording

burned onto a cd, which could come in handy when going through gun mounting practice at home. It will also go a long way towards triggering the beneficial thought processes needed to make the home practice session successful.

I asked Lieske about the cost of utilizing the video recorder and his software package. At his School of

Shooting there isn't any added cost when video is thrown into the mix, but to make it work, he says students must get out of the one hour lesson mindset. "Students must be ready to commit to a two or three hour session," he says. "You can't go out and shoot five targets and then go inside for 15 minutes and look at a video recording and expect to accomplish anything worthwhile."

If you find yourself struggling with a shooting concept and you just can't seem to set it in motion, maybe you need to consider consulting a good instructor who employs video recording in his/her program. It will save you a lot of time, trouble and money in the long run. Take it from someone who has seen what top notch instruction along with video recording can do – seeing is believing! ■