

CROSS DOMINANCE

Dear Technoid,

There I was in Atlanta, in the pouring rain, trying to do the right thing by the Travelers. After missing 3 left to right 20 yard crossers I realized that there was something wrong. Sooo I closed the left eye and quickly dispatched the remaining circular pitch disks. Well what have we here? It seems that my left eye has decided that it wants to compete for control in the sight picture.

The scene changes to Prado Italy. - Day One: Shooting a five stand with a borrowed Beretta O/U. Six of the machines of the eight are from the left. Miss, miss, miss. Day Two: Transparent tape on the left lens and the Italians come over to congratulate their new hero.

What do I do now?

1. Relearn the site picture with the stronger left eye and keep my glasses clear?
2. Put a diffuser on the left lens forcing my normally dominant right eye to do its job
3. Say to myself "Think Right"?

Help,

J

Dear J,

Cross dominance (no, not the kind with whips and rubber aprons) is a problem for about 15% of shooters. There are sorts of fixes. I am sure that one will work for you. One thing that you cannot do is "learn" the sight picture with new dominant left eye while you still shoot from the right shoulder. Unless your master eye is over the rib, your apparent leads will vary depending whether the bird is coming from the left or right. You cannot have that and stay sane for very long.

The whole idea of a cross dominance fix is to force your right eye to be dominant. The usual method is simply to weaken or obstruct the vision of the left eye.

If possible, you would like to continue to use binocular vision (both eyes) as that is what gives you your depth perception. Depth perception does not mean too much in trap and skeet where distances are well known, but it is helpful in sporting and 5-Stand. It's loss is not insurmountable though as you do get to view the targets (with both eyes open) before shooting them.

The usual approaches to cross dominance are:

1) Switch shooting sides. If you are shooting right handed and the left eye is dominant, become a left handed shooter. This is usually the best approach with a new shooter, but is a very difficult adjustment for a seasoned shooter like yourself. If you go this route, just make sure that you really are left eye dominant and strongly so. All cross dominance is not strong. It can go back and forth with fatigue, age, injury or disease.

2) Blink down. Here you simply keep both eyes open as you raise the gun and close the off eye as the gun touches your cheek. This gives you some of the advantages of binocular vision, but the final stage of one eyed shooting. Some shooters find that this makes the target "jump" when they blink down.

3) Occlude the off master eye. Here you simply block or dim the vision in the off eye. You can use a darker shooting lens, a bit of frosted cellophane tape, a paper dot or any such thing. I like the dot because it allows you to use off eye peripheral vision.

When placing the dot, mount the EMPTY gun a la trap shooting. Have someone place the dot on your off eye lens just so that it obscures your vision of the front bead. The dot really doesn't need to be bigger than 3/8".

4) Lastly, you might consider eye exercises. There are a bunch of vision improvement tapes out on the market and they work for some.

Regards,
Bruce Buck
Shotgun Report's Technoid