

Lady Shots

A lady's introduction to the sport of shooting is invariably through her father, husband or well-meaning male colleague who presents her with a 12/20 bore shotgun, a box of 25 low recoil cartridges and a few simple clay targets.

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Obviously there is plenty of encouragement and advice as she manages to connect with 20% of the targets. Although satisfied with the results she invariably suffers recoil trauma to the shoulder and upper chest, and for the next week skilled cosmetic enhancement is required to camouflage the bruising to her cheek. The plain fact is that many women never pick up a shotgun again.

After her introduction should the lady wish to shoot again, what can she look forward to? A course of instruction with an experienced coach and a suitable gun, or perhaps a few shots at the infrequent corporate shoot or local game/clay day with her partner's or family hand-me-down gun together with an abundance of unqualified advice?

A correctly fitted and balanced gun is a prerequisite; ladies in general require a stock comb height some 4 to 6 mm higher than their male counterparts with little or no toe to damage the shoulder pocket. A gun stock that is configured to suit a lady's physical contour will have a profiled grip, broad comfortable comb and be of the correct length and pitch angle thus enabling them to shoot with no



physical discomfort from recoil.

Provided they have hand-to-eye co-ordination and equipped with a suitable gun and cartridge, there is no reason why they should not enjoy the sport of shooting. Achievements obviously depend on the ability, resolve and commitment of the individual.

A basic fact often overlooked during coaching is that the average female engages more of the right hemisphere of the brain than the male who invariably is left-brain dominant. Each side of the brain has different characteristics, functions and interpretations, as such input as to technique must be explained in a significantly different way to achieve the required results.

I have seen many ladies who are more than capable shots, but with obvious faults in their style. They have been taught by well-meaning people who have the same flaws and as such the basic problems are never addressed. With a modicum of specialist coaching, these ladies would improve dramatically.

GUN ROOM ADVICE

- Always choose a gun to suit your physique, if you are comfortable with the weight and balance of the standard 12 bore I would suggest that you consider this as the preferred route. The standard 20 bore, traditionally the male choice for a lady, is not always the best

route to follow as they can be a punishing little tool if not loaded with the correct cartridge.

- A selection of low recoil cartridges are available at most gun shops, however a word of caution is in order in that many shooters presume that a 12 bore 24 gram shot load will produce less recoil than a 28 or 30 gram load. Bear in mind that the 24 gram 12 bore cartridge was primarily designed for shooting Olympic clay targets and as such is normally driven at a velocity that produces recoil in excess of the standard 28-30 gram load.
- Damage to your hearing through either shooting or spectating in close proximity is permanent. You can't stick a plaster on it and wait for it to heal it just gets worse. The standard set of over the head "Bins" are fine if not cumbersome for active participants, disposable Foam Plugs, well yes do serve a limited purpose and are better than nothing in an emergency. However the most comfortable, discrete and easy to use are EMTEC Noisebreakers which are to British Standard (noisebreaker.co.uk). As an aside I find Noisebreakers invaluable for wedding receptions where the statutory DJ apart from being stone deaf takes some form of mindless pleasure in destroying one's hearing, ruining any form of conversation and leaving a legacy of buzzing in one's ears for the next two hours.
- Protective shooting glasses are also a wise investment and are mandatory when competing in registered clay target competitions, which are common sense and a sound investment for game shooting. I have no need to proceed further other than to say that you only have one pair of eyes.

SUMMARY

How many of you are apprehensive as to the cost or even the use of the word instruction or coaching, the plain simple fact is that repeatedly practising a bad habit or style is most certainly not a sound investment. A qualified instructor is your investment in the future; you may well be corrected on more than a half a dozen faults during a session. The brain will perhaps only accept three of these, however over a period the subconscious will accept the changes and automatically store the information resulting in involuntary recall.

The door to female participation in shooting sports is open, walk right through and enjoy the sport, however do please ensure you do establish a solid base with suitable equipment.



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Tel: 01472 311113 Website: www.jacksongreenpreston.co.uk