

Follow Through: Pistol

Follow through is the completion of all your efforts in delivering the shot, as you maintain stance, grip, and sight alignment well after the shot has left the barrel. When the shot breaks, you must hold your position briefly. Allow the pistol to settle after recoil, before you lower the handgun. Similarly, you must maintain your concentration as part of your follow through.

The rationale behind follow through is manifold.

First, you want to reinforce holding your position through the entire shot. People who have either poor follow through or no follow through, may anticipate the shot breaking and actually lower the pistol prior to the shot leaving the barrel. (Ever drop a shot at the bottom of your target, or well below your group? This could be a problem with follow through.)

Second, for shot analysis, you need to be able to look at your sights and call your shots (prior to looking through your spotting scope or recalling your target, review your shot process and sight picture, in order to state where your shot landed.) If you've lowered your gun, you can't review your sight alignment and sight picture.

Third, from the review, determine what you did right, and consider areas for improvement.

So, here's what follow through consists of:

1. The shot breaks.
2. Maintain your hold, sight alignment and sight picture for a count of 1 or 2 seconds.
3. Allow the pistol to recover from the recoil, and settle back into your natural point of aim.
4. Review the following items:
 - What did the sight alignment look like?
 - What did the sight picture look like?
 - Did your natural point of aim return to your aiming point on the target?
 - How did the grip feel?
 - How did your trigger action feel?
5. From the above review, call where the shot landed on the target (i.e. 7 ring/high right, or 10 ring at 9 o'clock.)
6. Lower the pistol.
7. Confirm your shot call with a spotting scope or recalling your target. If there is a difference between what you called and where it actually landed, try to figure out why this took place. (Calling shots is a learned skill. It takes time and repetition. Don't give up if you're having difficulty.)
8. Analyze what went right and congratulate yourself. If the shot could be improved, decide what element needs to be worked on, and develop a positive action plan to work from.

Follow through is often overlooked, especially when one becomes overly concerned with scores. Instead of allowing the shot to leave the barrel, they are rushing to the scope to see how they did. As a result, they undo all of their hard work. Take the shot and follow through. Your groups will get smaller and you'll learn a lot about your shooting.