

Breathing Routine

Good breath control is vital in target shooting. Breathing supplies the blood stream with the oxygen necessary for all body functions and to eliminate waste elements (such as carbon dioxide) from the blood. Once a stable position is established, an athlete must integrate the principles of breathing. While breathing, the oxygen inhaled is used to supply muscles with energy, ensuring optimal potential of these muscles. This includes the muscles that are involved in the position, as well as the muscles in the eyes.

For maximum stability when firing, the athlete must stop breathing for a few seconds. It is of the utmost importance that they do not hold their breath for more than five (5) to seven (7) seconds, as the tension will increase in their chest muscles and reduce stability. After this period, muscles start to lack oxygen and will quiver and eyesight will be negatively affected. This becomes evident if the athlete's perception of the aiming mark goes from black to gray.

Breathing should be relaxed and normal as the athlete establishes a sight picture. Then, they should inhale and exhale deeply, take another deep inhale, exhale normally, and completely release their chest muscles and hold their breath. After the shot, a small exhale is followed by normal breathing, and the cycle is repeated.

Athletes should use their breathing to confirm that the rifle is moving up and down in a perfect vertical manner and that the rifle is not canted. Also, when breathing in and out, the athlete can visually confirm that they are aiming on the proper diagram.

Again, it is important for athlete not to fire if they feel they want to breathe again. Their shot will not be perfect and their result will be affected. They should not be afraid to restart their entire sequence, as this will only improve their level of performance. Relaxed breathing decreases "vibrations" caused by tension.

To achieve a proper breathing sequence, the information in the following graph should be adhered to:

