GETTING STARTED IN MOUNTED SHOOTING



MOUNTEDSHOOTINGSUPPLIES.COM

FORWARD

Mounted Shooting Supplies would like to be the first to welcome you to the sport of mounted shooting.

Mounted Shooting Supplies is providing this booklet to help you get "up to speed" a lot quicker and to provide a "one-stop" shop for most of your mounted shooting needs.

When we started in the sport, there was no single information point or source providing the whole picture of the sport. We had to figure it out by "piecing" together the various components. We asked lots of questions of other riders, often receiving conflicting advice. In the process, we lost time and effort and made some costly mistakes.

As with any equestrian activity, you will get a lot of differing perspectives and advice from others. That can be helpful at some point, but first it is important for you to develop a good general awareness of the basics and build a foundation to start and grow from.

Mounted Shooting Supplies has designed this booklet to assist you in developing a starting point that will help you get going in the mounted shooting sport quicker and winning sooner!

We hope you will consider Mounted Shooting Supplies for your product needs as you progress from "Beginner to Winner"!

Good Luck – We'll be cheering for you!

Steve & Arlene Williams





QUICK START

1. Read this booklet	< □
 Purchase one of the Mounted Shooting Training Packages available from MountedShootingSupplies.com. 	< D
 Go to the CMSA.com/events website and watch the many interesting mounted shooting competition videos they provide and update regularly. 	< 0
 Attend and watch a mounted shooting event in your area or connect with a friend already in the sport of mounted shooting. 	< D
 Contact a Club in your area and introduce yourself as newly interested in mounted shooting. You will receive friendly help and advice and information on events and trainers 	< 0
 Discuss with the club or a trainer, the best approach for either training your horse or finding a trained horse and the options for your own initial "Getting Started" training. 	< D
7. Ride the training practice patterns in AJ horses' book "Perfecting Performance".	< D
8. Join a mounted shooting club and Association.	< D
9. Ride in a training or practice event.	 ✓ □
10. Get another friend or support companion interested in mounted shooting. It will make it all that more fun!	< D



era six-shooter gun at balloons using black powder blanks. Scoring is simply based on

the total time of the run plus penalty point for targets missed and barrels knocked over and a few other possible mistakes. (Lowest score number wins!). Each pattern consists of ten targets and the rider has two guns with a total of ten shots, requiring changing the guns "at the mid-point in the run". The events are divided into classes, so each rider is competing with others of similar skill level.

The challenge and excitement of mounted shooting is that it brings together four distinctly different skill components:

- 1. Rider skills
- 2. Horse skills & temperament
- 3. Gun handling
- 4. Course navigation & strategy

You are probably good at one or several of these components, but, for example, it won't be of much benefit if you "set the dirt on fire" running a



blistering time and miss several targets or make a wrong turn in the pattern. The challenge and fun of mounted shooting, is getting it all together in a balanced and coordinated manner.

Learn the individual components of the sport before trying to put it all together. This approach works best and is generally less costly in time and money. While it is a lot of fun to ride the horse and blast away, you don't have to wait until you are riding to practice gun handling or course patterns. You can work on each component separately such as Gun handling while watching TV or studying the Course patterns while waiting at the dentist office.

One more important point...even if you are an experienced rider, purchase a set of the mounted shooting training videos. They cost less than the cost of one lesson and will really help you get the big picture. We still refer to ours after 12 years - another good use and enjoyment of our off-horse "down-time".

The following pages will provide an overview of each of the mounted shooting main components and some tips for "competing sooner and winning quicker"!

THE RIDER

Riders of all ages and experience compete in mounted shooting. Certainly rider skill is the most important component. But, as with any sport or endeavor, everyone has to start at "zero" on some aspects of it. Frequently newcomers will only trot through the course, not because they can't ride faster, but because they are going at a speed where they can "put it all together". Often times they actually win, because they ran smooth and shot clean (hit 'em all).

Being able to ride singlehanded with the reigns and holding the gun in the other hand while devoting a segment of your thought processes to navigation is a fundamental skill that is needed. This multi-tasking load can be a mind-full when you are first starting. We recommend that you concentrate on your riding skills first, starting with simple patterns and advancing to some of the more difficult ones until you get to the point where you are thinking ahead and actually executing the turns almost as on "autopilot"! (The horse reading your body signals or your mind).

One of the best mounted shooting practice guides is the book "Perfecting Performance for the Mounted Shooter" (Sold at Mounted-ShootingSupplies.com). Using the techniques in this book will get you on-track in the shortest get to this point. You can at the barrels or targets. of cost in mounted shooting constantly jumping off your if you hit them.

Our other recommendation is to connect with a good mounted shooting trainer or with a highly experienced rider in the mounted shooting sport. If you are totally new to performance riding, (tight turns and speed riding), a barrel racing trainer can also help, but be mindful that barrel racing is all about top speed. Most of the mounted shooting patterns require "Rating" (controlling speed) of the horse to be able to handle closely grouped sets of targets. So full-speed ahead isn't what it's all about.

> One other important consideration is to be sure your horse is properly trained for mounted shooting and is OK with the effects of gun fire. Otherwise, you may get a real sporty ride!

Suffice it to say, becoming a competitive mounted shooting rider isn't accomplished overnight. Like any other performance sport or endeavor, it depends on how much you study and practice. No matter at what speed you progress, you will find that mounted shooting is a very challenging and gratifying sport, especially when you and your horse become a team. For lots of riders, it's not all about winning the event, but that they achieved their own performance objectives.

> Make it smooth and coordinated and you will be a winner in your own right!



What About the HORSE?

The first question asked by most people who are interested in mounted shooting is "What kind of training does the horse need to handle the shooting"? Like most things with horses, the answer is quite varied. Suffice it to say you shouldn't get on your horse and start

shooting. A lot depends on the horse's disposition, training and back around. Ranch or police horses who have been exposed to gun fire and other commotion, often accept shooting without too much fanfare. But most horses will require progressive exposure and training to the sounds and secondary effects of shooting off their back. Some horses require a lot of conditioning before being ready to ride in competition.

It is not only the sound that the horse has to accept, but also the sparks and smoke from the gun and the effects of the balloon

bursting with bits of it flying in the air.

The first consideration to be addressed is whether to train a horse you already own for the sport or to buy a trained mounted shooting horse. I have done it both ways. In a simplified view,



we suggest that if you are not an experienced trainer and don't have a lot of spare time or suitable facilities to work with your horse, then send your horse to a mounted shooting recognized trainer or buy a ready to go mounted shooting horse. That will get you in the action faster, reduce frustration and probably reduce the risk of failure and possible injury.

There are various methods of training a horse to accept gunfire. First and probably most important that you realize it is not an overnight process. An example, you might think your horse is fine when shooting in an outdoor arena, only to find the horse reacts totally differently to gunfire in an indoor arena. Not all horses choose to like the sport of Mounted Shooting!

We recommend that before you start with shooting that you get the



horse to accept earplugs (Mounting-ShootingSupplies.com). Horses hear **better than people and you would find** the effects of a 45 shot next to your ear pretty painful. Your horse is your best friend and partner in Mounted Shooting, so apply the "Golden Rule to Them".

In a much abbreviated and simplified explanation the most used training technique is to start with the Spookless Cowboy Mounted Shooting Edition audio CD (MountedShootingSupplies. com) and a toy cap gun, then progress up to using the same black powder blanks used in mounted shooting, starting with half-loads and working up to full loads. Re-emphasizing the earlier point, this is not an overnight process. It takes a lot of persistence and patience, mainly to avoid causing a problem from which it is hard to recover. Our recommendation is that you send you horse to a credible and respected trainer who specializes in the sport. Several trainers are listed in the helpful resources section of this book.

The Association rules require the saddle to be of western design and constructed of leather. You can start with most any kind of western saddle, but most mounted shooters evolve to a "Shooting Saddle" which are often lighter in weight (similar to a barrel racing saddle) and usually have a shorter, forward slanting horn.

Reins will be another consideration, as you will be riding single-handed (gun in the other hand). Many riders use a shortened version of a barrel or a roping single rein, in order to have close control of the horse when they are in the forward "Go" shooting position.



One very important item is leg and feet protection for the horse. These are essential in speed running and sharp turns.

THE GUNS OF MOUNTED SHOOTING

The guns utilized in mounted shooting are 45 LC Caliber Single-Action revolvers. There are numerous choices of manufacturers and styles. Manufacturer websites are listed in the Helpful Resources section of this book.

Right up front, even though mounted shooting uses black powder blanks commonly referred to in the sport as "ammo" it is important to note that these are real guns. They need to be handled and treated as such. The basic and absolute safety rule is never to point at something you don't intend to shoot and always consider the gun to be loaded until you personally ascertain otherwise. Get in the habit of checking the gun for live ammo each time you pick it up. Don't take anyone else's word "it's empty"! Even with black powder blanks, you can get hurt or hurt someone else or your horse.

The term "Single Action" means that the gun has to be manually re-cocked after each shot. This is done by pulling the hammer back to the "ready to fire" position using your thumb, then shooting the gun by pulling the trigger. These are two distinct separate actions. Many beginners especially with small hands will have difficulty, initially, with the cocking process. Don't worry! While it may be daunting at first, you There are many relatively small hands Champions. They too started with some difficulty! A Gun Cocking Trainer and Hand/thumb exerciser is available from Mounted Shooting Supplies. Which will help you become proficient at the gun cocking process.







The rules require that your guns be single action revolvers of .45 Colt caliber, designed prior to 1898, or reproductions thereof. Other than that, the choice of guns is largely a personal one. We suggest that you try out as many different models of guns as possible. This is best done either by going to an event, meeting other mounted shooters and asking questions and possibly handling

their guns. Don't "dry fire" their empty guns without first inserting a set of "Snap Caps" (Mounted Shooting Supplies.com) to prevent damage





to the gun. Some people believe that it's OK to "dry fire" certain brands of guns. Our advice is, don't do it! We have paid the price over the years. "Snap Caps" are far less expensive than gun repairs or having malfunctions in competition. Snap Caps also enable you to simulate gun handling; shooting and gun changes at home in your "spare" off-horse time. This is the best and least expensive technique to get your gun skills up to your riding speed.



Federal law requires that guns be sold through a Licensed Fire Arms Dealer. There are a few limited exceptions, but it is best to check with a licensed dealer. When you cross state lines, be aware that each state has its own laws with respect to the possession and carriage of fire arms within that state. Failure to comply with these laws can be expensive and problematic. The Travelers Guide to Firearms Laws for the 50 states (MountedShooting-Supplies.com) provides a comprehensive explanation of the various state requirements and laws regarding firearms. So best to know before you go!

It won't be long in the sport before you hear the term Action Job for your guns. That refers to the process of fine tuning your gun mechanisms including reducing the spring tensions for the hammer and trigger. Our suggestion is to hold off getting an "Action Job" until you have a pretty good suggestion will probably embarrassment of cross-over (off-hand) shooting your horse!

One related point is shooting organization any design of holster numerous choices,

Malar

Holsters. The mounted rules allow just about you prefer. There are and design offerings



for custom made holster options. Before you buy a fancy custom made set (likely pretty expensive), We suggest that you try out the various options to develop a feel for your preference. Then graduate to the style that becomes your preference.

If you are totally new to performance riding or are short-waisted, you may consider the use of pommel holsters in the beginning. Pommel holsters attach to the swell (forward part of the saddle). A double pommel holster rig with a detachable second holster will allow you to reposition the second holster to be worn on your hip, as you gain experience, making for fast and smooth gun changes.

This starting technique will then give you time to sort out what holster setup works best for

you before making an expensive investment.









RUNNING THE COURSE

The courses (patterns) are one of the four main components of mounted shooting. The courses always consist of ten targets (balloons) and are divided in groups of five. The first five are generally referred to the random pattern and the second five are referred to as the Rundown. With a few exceptions, the patterns require shooting all one color balloons first and then shooting the other color second. There are a number of patterns wherein it is possible to hit two balloons with one shot. But if you were to miss the first color balloon (Random) and hit the second color (Rundown) balloon, you might be in for a double penalty. So

and the procedural rules is important. SHOOTING SUPPLIES.COM

becoming familiar with the pattern layouts

In the rider section, we mentioned that it is helpful to devote some specific attention to studying the concepts of the patterns and using your "Off-Horse Quiet Time" to run the patterns in your mind (rainy day). Mounted Shooting Course Management by Hired Gun Horsemanship is

an excellent patterns study book (MountedShooting-Supplies.com) that will give you an explanation and some options for executing each pattern. By studying this book and using the Shooting Stars Run Cards (cards sold at MountedShootingSupplies.com), and watching the riders ahead of you, you will be best prepared to most efficiently execute the pattern and probably give you the winning edge in your class.



Certainly early in your mounted shooting endeavors, educating yourself on the patterns will more than pay back the small investment in the patterns handbook and run cards. Navigating the courses is probably the biggest component of the mental workload in the entire time you are actually running the pattern. Being as familiar as possible of the patterns and rules will give you a distinct advantage.

Obviously being smooth and coordinated requires you to know where you are going and have a mental picture of the course plan and strategy. To put the key mounted shooting components into perspective, assuming you can ride your horse at a reasonable canter or lope (or faster) then the course management success is about as important as your gun handling effectiveness.



Part of the fun of mounted shooting is the dressing up to look like a cowboy/cowgirl or one of your favorite actors of the Wild West era. The "dress code" of the mounted shooting sport is intended to preserve the feel of the cowboy spirit and to add interest and intrigue for the spectators and often the news media. But mainly it's fun for all of us in the sport.

There are a few basic rules, but in general the possibilities are wide ranging. For cowboys, the requirements are simple, a cowboy hat a helmet), a long sleeve cowboy trousers (button with a set of chaps or for combourded or c



For women, when wearing pants, the same basics are required as for men. But women also have the option of wearing a split skirt or a long dress, making for some beautiful and colorful outfits. When wearing a split skirt, a cowboy hat and a blouse with long sleeves are required. When wearing a dress the women are not required to wear a hat and the dresses may be short sleeve.

When considering all the choices in cowboy era clothing in hats, shirts, pants boots, belts and chaps or chinks or dresses, one can create a simple look very inexpensively or for a little extra investment, look like one of the famous screen stars that we admired as kids. There are western wear stores in almost in every city and on the internet. Many actually specialize in clothing specifically for mounted shooting and in some cases are run by folks who are in the sport themselves. Be sure to let the retailer know that you are in mounted shooting. You will make some new friends and possibly realize other benefits.

As a personal note, we would like to encourage you to shop with any of the companies who are sponsors of the mounted shooting associations, clubs and the sport. These sponsorships are valuable to our sport, helping with the costs of operating and promoting the sport and they often provide prizes and other features for the events. By the way,if you see a sponsor at an event, be sure to take a moment to express your appreciation for their support and participation.

NOW IT IS YOUR TURN

The majority of the mounted shooting events are held on weekends...both single day events and two day events. The regional and world championship events are usually 3-5 days in length. These longer events are typically held in larger cities or locations which offer a variety of other activities and sights to see and excellent dining, making for a fun, vacation like trip. Also, these events include tack, saddles, guns and clothing vendors which add to the interest and fun for all.

The one day events usually provide an ideal place for those interested in or new to mounted shooting to get a perspective of all the components of mounted shooting and to meet others from beginners to world champions and often trainers with mounted shooting horses for sale. Also these events offer an excellent opportunity to see the various saddles, tack, guns, holsters and clothing and most importantly how an event operates.

At first exposure, entering a mounted shooting event might seem a little intimidating, but in actuality it is a very simple

process. The simplest several lessons from a will coach approach is to take local instructor, who you through your first event. This is one of the quickest ways to "get up to speed" and meet most of the other club members, especially those in your class and competition level. Usually after one or two events, you will know almost everyone and they will be cheering for you! By then you will be comfortable with the entire process. The process is fundamentally the same, whether it is a single day event (or possibly you are only going to compete for one day of a two day event). First you must be a member of the Association



under which the Club and event is sanctioned. Then sign up for the event (Association Website) and then just show up and sign in, preferably several hours or possibly the evening before the event starts. If the event hasn't reached the max attendance limit (usually larger events) you can still register (enter) at the event, just before "The Books Close". That is when all the entries for the event are finalized in the event management computer data. Typically the "books close" about 1 - 2 hours before the event start time. So to avoid feeling pressured for time, especially when new to the sport, try to arrive at least several hours before the start time. Also this will allow you some "warm up" time in the arena prior to the actual runs. This may also be an important opportunity for you and your horse to get the feel of the arena. Some horses need to see everything in the arena (banners, gates and in some cases, the balloon prep/setters station and other surroundings).

Generally about an hour before the event starts, the run patterns (stages) and the run ("Go") order are posted for the day and sometimes for the entire event. This is the time to familiarize yourself with the patterns or at least the first pattern of the event. When you are new to mounted shooting, having set of the Shooting Stars pattern cards can really be helpful, these are pocket sized just the several pattern cards for the day

in your pocket and refer to them, right up until starting your run. You should refer to the "Go Order" or ask someone which classes or levels will run first. Sometimes the lower levels run first and other times the higher levels run first. It is important to know when you will run, so you can pick up your ammo, (which is provided by the



event) load your guns and be on your horse and ready to go when it is your turn. If for some reason, you miss your place in the run order; your turn can be "rolled" to a later point in the sequence. But it's best to be on-time. This also gives you the opportunity to be on your horse and watching the other riders in your class run the patterns. At most events the announcer



will call out the names of the next several riders in line. Most of the time the run order will remain the same for the entire event, making it easy to identify the people just ahead of you. While in line awaiting your turn, note the arena entry and exit gates, often they will be different. The entry gate will be obvious due to the riders line up, but sometimes with the excitement of the run, it's easy to forget and try to exit through the entry gate. Doing this is rude and can cause problems. Also, on the note of exiting after your run, never let you horse exit the arena by going directly from the run pattern out through the gate at more than a walk. Our recommendation is to end your run with the horse stopped and pointing back toward the top of the arena. If the horse is still "wound up" then dismounting can have a calming effect. It is not uncommon to see riders dismount from their horse in the arena and lead the horse out through the exit. Your trainer or instructor can advise on this.

When you enter the arena for your run, there will be a range master, usually located near the start line. The range master is the sole authority (manager) of the activity going on in the arena. He or she determines that the arena is safe for the run before giving you the go signal (a green light or an extended arm signal) and the range master provides a report to the scorekeeper (referred to as the "Crow's Nest") of any penalties you might be awarded from your run. You should absolutely never challenge or argue with the range master regarding any disagreement you might have with the announced results. There is a procedure for questioning or challenging the reported results. The range masters all started at "zero", so they are experienced mounted shooters like all of us, and are fair and impartial.

As you start your run, you will probably have your first gun in your hand before crossing the timer line. But you are not allowed to cock the gun until after crossing the timer line. When finishing your run, it is OK to have your second gun in hand when crossing the timer line. If you are new to mounted

shooting, we suggest that you bring your horse to a stop before reholstering your gun and looking at the scoreboard. We have

seen a fair share of

surprises happen at that



point. So stay focused on your ride and only do one thing at a time!

In larger events, you may choose to return your horse to the stall between runs and take the opportunity to watch the other riders and learn. If so, it is important to know the size of the classes (number of riders to go) before it is your turn again. After your first event, this will all fall into place. Just a note of common sense, if you put your horse back in the stall, it's best not to

leave your guns lying around in plain sight. Most of the mounted shooters are very honest, but not always the case with outsiders and guns are a very attractive theft item!



While on the subject of guns, if your gun were to malfunction or you drop your gun and don't have enough time to clean it before your run, you will find that many of the good hearted mounted shooters will jump to your rescue and loan you a gun for the run or you can "roll your turn" to a later point in the "Stage".

If you are at a multi-day event, you will have a stall for your horse. Typically the arena or the club sells shavings for the stalls. Most stipulate you buy the shavings from them. While it might save a dollar or so to bring your own, remember the arena or club has to earn some income to function or operate and provide the services and fun you receive from the event. Also be sure to thank the club management and arena staff for the great services and a good event! On the note of stalls, for your horses' sake be sure to attach some form of identification (your name and contact information). The Shooting Stars





I.C.E. (In Case of Emergency) badge is quite convienient for this. This is pretty important, as horses can become ill or injured. Another important consideration when in a different venue and unknown security fencing around the grounds (open access to the areas outside of the arena grounds) is the use of a Shooting

Stars reflective collar which has a horse information ICE holder. If a horse gets loose in a strange setting it often will go on the run and not being in familiar surroundings will get lost. Then law enforcement or others don't know who to contact in a rapid response manner. These precautions are so

inexpensive, that it's surprising that many owners don't pay attention until something unforeseen happens.

Usually the run times and any penalties are posted shortly after each stage has been completed and you can check how you did either against your own goals or in comparison to the other competitors. It is helpful to make a note of the pattern number, the run times and any penalties. Also note the times of the winners in your class or level. This will

give you a feel for what you might want to work on in practice. Keep an ongoing record and note your progress. The Mounted Shooter's Event Record log book is ideal for this.

Sold at MountedShootingSupplies.com



Usually the event host (club) will hold an awards ceremony shortly after the event is complete. Even if you didn't win, going to the ceremony provides additional opportunity to meet other riders and enjoy the comradery and social air of the riders group. Also attending the awards ceremony will quickly establish your reputation as a good sport competitor who respects and appreciates the successes of the others. You can build a lot of points for yourself, if you find an opportunity to introduce yourself and congratulate the winners on their performance, especially if you watched their run. The rewards from this kind of action-gesture will be realized for a long time (in ways that you may never be aware of!).



From a longer term stand point, you are awarded points for each match that you attend and for your overall standing (outcome) in the event. The event points range from a single point to several points per event and standing and often a two day event is in actuality two oneday events which helps build your point

standing quicker. The points are often utilized by the clubs for end of the year prizes for the club high points class winners and also are utilized by the Association to qualify for entry into the World Championship. This will be explained in your club and association rules.

For those new to going to events, especially when traveling some distance, if you have friends attending the same event, who live close to you or along the route of travel to the event, to join up and "Caravan" together. This increases the comradery, makes the trip seem shorter and if a tire or some other problem develops, you are able to help each other. A set of inexpensive CB "Walkie-Talkies" makes it even more fun and successful.



MOUNTED SHOOTING SUPPLIES WILL BE CHEERING FOR YOU!!

GOOD LUCK!!





The Go-To Places for Mounted Shooting Information And Supplies

ASSOCIATIONS

Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association Jackpot Mounted Shooting

MOUNTED SHOOTING TRAINERS

AJ Horses, Jim Hanson Dry Creek Training, Bob & Kim Redo Denny Chapman Performance Horses Matt Jobe, Trainer-Clinician Curt Moore Shootfire Ranch

GUNS

Cimarron F.A. Co. Colt Ruger Taylors & Co. Inc. Early & Modern Firearms Company A. Uberti www.cmsaevents.com www.jackpotmountedshooting.com

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> We welcome your feedback and communication at: Steve@mountedshootingsupplies.com

> > -With our compliments-

Helping you and your horse win!