



Jump Start Your Mounted Shooting Start

Mounted Shooting is an exciting and fun Equestrian Sport. It is suitable and structured for for all ages, from Wranglers to Seniors, so any and all have a chance to participate and win. It is as dynamic as you desire and challenging and rewarding. The rewards may be monetary, or the elation of making a “Clean Run” where you and your horse were a coordinated and smooth team! It is a friendly environment in which there is always someone that will help you with most any aspect of the sport.

In general, mounted shooting combines three main skill components, Performance Horsemanship - 60%, Gun Handling – 20% and Course Navigation – 20%. Getting to a competitive level requires bringing your skills in each area to be balanced and coordinated. That isn't all that difficult using a progressive training scenario for yourself. To illustrate the point, when learning to fly, we don't just initially go out and hop in the airplane and “Shoot” a few Landings! We start by learning the basic components of flight. Usually in a classroom in the beginning. Same principal applies to mounted shooting. While it is probably fun and exciting to go out and “Shoot” some patterns, you would be more effective and safer, if you had a base concept of the actions involved before doing so. We're not talking about a lot of time or cost. The approach described in this pamphlet, will save you time and money and will “Jump Start” your capabilities and fun and competitive standing.

The perspective provided, assumes starting with no Performance Horse riding experience (Barrel racing or similar experience), and no Single Action Gun handling experience. If you already have some of these experiences, you will be ahead of the “learning curve” with that aspect. But to be competitive, you still need to bring the other components up to a balanced coordination.

As with any sport or “Learned Skill” or capability, there will be multiple approaches or techniques. Ask 10 different people the same question and you will probably get a different set of answers, some with strong personal emotion. Most of the opinions will be valid in their own way, (occasionally some are just fundamentally wrong – but you will figure that out in due course). The difference in answers is, that person's technique or opinion of what works best for them. Actually it is good to get different perspectives. At some point, you will be able to offer your own “suggestions” of what works for you.

The “Getting Started” approach provided in this pamphlet, is based on the concept that you can get “Up to Speed” quicker and less expensive than “jumping on a Horse and Blasting away”! Even under the supervision of an instructor, (at some \$ per hour) that is a very inefficient way to start. You can learn most of the technical & operational “insights” from Mounted Shooting Training videos & books and connecting with a friend in the sport, at little or no cost. Save your instructor dollars until after you comprehend the basics and are ready or need to work out some of the wrinkles in your coordination and riding skills. (This training approach is especially useful in the situation when there is not a Mounted Shooting Instructor nearby).

Another important aspect of this training approach, is that it is a modular concept, in that you work on the components individually, bringing them together as you build a base skill in each component. That will be further explained in the individual skill sections below.

One other feature of this training approach, assuming you are starting with no performance riding experience and that the performance riding is the largest learning component, this modular approach will enable you to progress to a point of reaching fundamental Mounted Shooting capabilities before having to purchase the Guns & Holsters (\$\$). If you already have competition riding skills (Example – Barrel Racing), adding the Gun handling skills is usually easier. (You can even work on the course navigation skills before needing the guns). Described below and in the Gun Handling 101 Tutorial

The “**Perfecting Performance Booklet**” provides an excellent progressive method for beginning with the basics and progressing up through patterns riding. Also, the videos by **AJ Horses (Vol 1 & 2)** and **Dry Creek Training (Getting Started in Mounted Shooting)** are very helpful. These inexpensive training tools provide a great “Start-Up” program. You can make a lot of progress in performance riding before you need to buy guns and other mounted shooting gear and supplies.

When you reach a point where you are ready for some actual mounted shooting pattern work, then you will need an “**Arena Targets**” setup. You still don’t have to have guns, ammo or balloons. You can use one-gallon plastic milk/water jugs as simulated balloon targets and use your arm-finger to simulate shooting at the targets. The objective at this point is to start developing your timing and coordination of performance riding and shooting motions and the pattern navigation.

If you have guns and holsters, then practice with Dry Firing at the targets. (Use “**Snap Caps**” when dry firing so as not to damage your gun). These dry firing pattern exercises will save the cost of ammo and time and efforts in balloons resetting. When you get your performance riding, pattern navigation, and target pointing skills fairly well synchronized and coordinated, the actual shooting and hitting the balloon target will likely be good. Always remember to keep your eyes on the target, until you have shot (Simulated or actual).

When you have guns and holsters, another time and cost saving training effort is to work on developing your gun handling skills at home. Practice drawing the gun, cocking, dry firing at a target and re-holstering. A key objective is to avoid looking down at the holsters. (Difficult habit to break! - Later will cost you wins!) If you find yourself doing this, then use a set of “**No Look Down Googles**”.

Mounted Shooting Trainers. The decision of training with an instructor, is influenced mostly by the location of the instructor. Either way, whether you train on your own or with an instructor, you will be further ahead if you build an awareness of the mounted shooting terminology and rules and the basics of gun handling and running the courses. Following the above described training program will get you to an event level capability fairly quickly. If you are uncertain as to your event readiness, then either find an instructor or if totally new to mounted shooting, go to an event and observe the entire process. At the event you will likely meet an instructor or a friend who will coach you through the process. Section 5 of “**Getting Started in Mounted Shooting booklet**” free on MountedShootingSupplies.com, describes a typical event scenario.

As you develop an understanding of the basics of mounted shooting, it may be helpful to get some training from a recognized mounted shooting instructor to help you advance, identify areas for improvement and add additional perspective.

Regarding the course patterns, there are a sizable number and they can be confusing. MountedShootingSupplies.com offers a set of “**Pattern Run Cards**”. These cards show the easiest pattern navigation route, shooting sequence, gun change areas and rules. They are individual cards for each pattern which you can easily keep in your shirt pocket and refer to right up until each run. These cards are especially helpful for beginners, although lots of experienced riders find them helpful.

Overall an important point to remember, is that speed is often not the most important aspect to winning. Coordinated and smooth riding, shooting and navigating are keys to winning. Your success at slower speeds, will translate into faster winning runs, as you gain experience.

There are several other tutorials on MountedShootingSupplies.com - **Mounted Shooting Info Tab**, including; Holsters – 101, Guns 101, Arena Equipment Guide and others, along with several videos which will add to your understanding and knowledge of mounted shooting.

The items in **bold** above may be found on MountedShootingSupplies.com and include additional details on the respective products and equipment.