



How Often Should You Practice to Maintain Your Marksmanship?

Shooting skills are quite perishable. It will do you no good to book a big hunt and rush to finish projects at work, just to miss the big shot. Plan ahead.

Try this plan. Build a checklist starting several weeks before the season or hunt.

-  Take your firearm apart and inspect it in detail.
-  What goodies would you like to add to your gun? Now is the time for lasers and a new scope.
-  What ammunition do you want to try? Now is the time to find the ammo or reload the exact load for both bullet and power.
-  What gear did you forget the last time you hunted? Try preloading your field bag.
-  Now go to the range and brush up those marksmanship skills.

My students are told to practice as often as possible. What does that mean? How good do you want to be? How good is good enough? Very few can put their gun in the safe for six months or so and expect success. Practice at least once a month. Muscle memory will fade and the good habits you spent time building will go away. Add adrenalin to the mix and your fine motor skills will be degraded. This can be eased by a lot of practice.

Another option is to find an airsoft gun that is similar to yours and practice. You can fire the plastic BBs in your backyard. Don't shoot the cat. Many gun enthusiasts will mount their hunting optics on their airsoft gun and practice before they go to the range. They find that their skills transfer. The quick transfer from the naked eye to the scene through your scope can be a problem if you have not practiced it recently. Holding the gun steady as you search the small area covered by the scope can be practiced with an airsoft gun.

Remember: You need a plan to practice well before you hunt.

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