

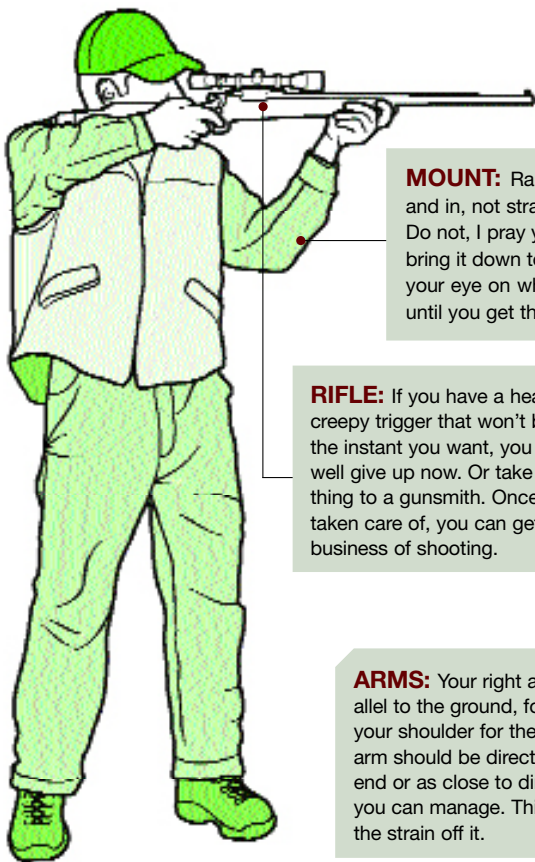
The Worst Position of All

You shouldn't shoot offhand, but you will. Here's how to do it right



SHOOTING A RIFLE from the offhand position is something you should avoid at all costs except when it's the only way you can get a shot—which is the case a lot of the time.

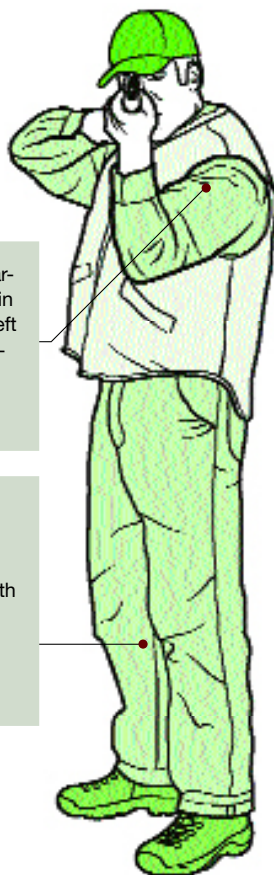
The first thing to take note of is that nobody can hold a rifle steadily in the offhand position. The best that anyone can do is minimize the shakes and wobbles. You have to resign yourself to the fact that the scope is going to bounce and jiggle, and train yourself to pull (not squeeze, pull) that trigger in the instant when the crosshairs are where you want them. Here's how.



MOUNT: Raise the rifle to your shoulder, bringing it out and in, not straight up, so it doesn't snag on your clothing. Do not, I pray you, raise the muzzle high in the air and then bring it down to aim, as I have seen some people do. Keep your eye on what you want to shoot, and bring the rifle up until you get the sight picture in your scope.

RIFLE: If you have a heavy, creepy trigger that won't break at the instant you want, you might as well give up now. Or take the damn thing to a gunsmith. Once this is taken care of, you can get to the business of shooting.

ARMS: Your right arm should be parallel to the ground, forming a pocket in your shoulder for the rifle butt. Your left arm should be directly under the fore-end or as close to directly under as you can manage. This takes a lot of the strain off it.



STANCE: Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, with your left side facing the target.

PETZAL'S SECRET TIP

A VERY, VERY GOOD PISTOL SHOOTER gave me this piece of wisdom. Since you can't stop the muzzle from moving, you can at least guide it into moving in a controllable pattern, i.e., concentric circles. Make the circles smaller and smaller, and when they get small enough, shoot. Trust me, it works. The other important advice is to practice. Then practice some more. And after that, practice. That's the key.