

## Continuous Improvement for Target Shooters

Most shooters have a desire to improve their performance over time. If you are happy with the current level of your performance, great. You can relax and stop reading this article.

If you believe in the philosophy of “If is isn’t broken, don’t fix it”, quit reading now or change your philosophy. If you do want to improve, then read on.

The key difference between the top shooters and club shooters is the level of effort and time we are prepared to commit. Your first decision is to determine how much time and effort you are prepared to invest for the improvement. For each individual this is a personal decision. This could range from an extra practice session each week to improve from C Grade to B Grade or training every day to achieve International success. The key is to make the decision and stick to it.

Continuous improvement is a relatively simple concept that was adopted by the process manufacturing world, but easily translates into all aspects of our lives.

Many shooters I know do want to improve and love fiddling with their setup, equipment and techniques. They are also impatient and seem to want to change several things at the same time. Consequently, if their performance changes for good or bad, they cannot be sure what affected their shooting performance.

The first step on the path to continuous improvement is to measure a range of items to determine where we are at in our activity performance.

These measurements needs to be repeatable and easy (human nature doesn’t like difficult). It also needs to be reasonably short term. Making a change at the beginning of the season and then reviewing your seasons average is easy and repeatable, but as the feedback is very slow, we would take many seasons to improve.

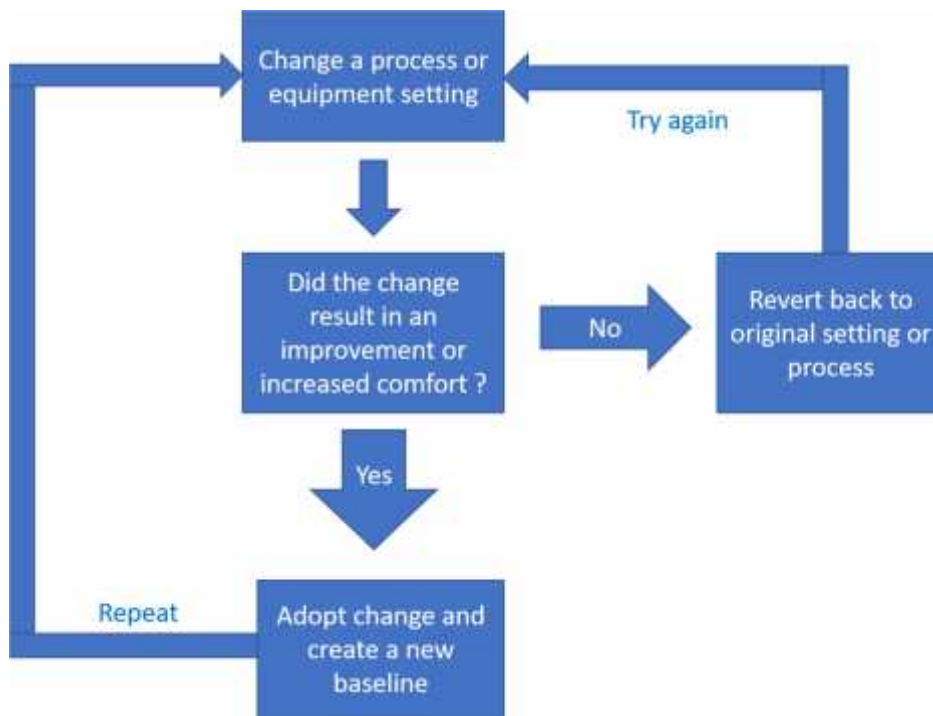
You and your coach will need to decide on what measurements are needed to allow you to focus on various aspects of your performance. These some of these measurements will include:

- The group size;
- the steadiness of our hold;
- degree of cant;
- the hold time before releasing the shot;
- the time between each shot to determine our rhythm;
- trigger release;
- quality of aim.

Some of these measurements may be more subjective, such as the quality of your sight picture, while others will be statistics from a SCATT/Noptel session. These measurements form the initial base line of your performance.

This base line is then used as the basis of determining if a change is good, bad or indifferent.

The continuous improvement process is quite straightforward.



However, our sport is a complex one where small changes can have significant effects. Just changing the length of the rifle stock or shape of the pistol grip can change the comfort factor – the question then is did the change improve the quality of the hold ?

New technologies such as multi-axis accelerometers, are now emerging that can complement existing technologies like SCATT and Noptel to help provide the answers/details we need.

These sensors can track very fine movements and with the right analysis tools can provide a quantifiable result to help us determine the answers, quickly and easily.

We know that the brain cannot