

## CROSS DOMINANCE CURES

Dear Technoid:

I have, for years, shot rifles left handed although I am right handed. The main reason was that I found it easier to close my right eye. Since taking up the shotgun I continue to shoot left handed. I am at best mildly cross dominant. When I do a 'thumb test' I see two almost identical images albeit the left eye is dominant from an alignment sense.

My problem is that I often mis-queue (at trap) on right to left clays and miss well behind. Left to right isn't as bad but I never get a clear mental perspective since there always seems to be two barrels out there.

What to do ? Shoot with one eye ? Close down a bit on the right ? What are the pros and cons of using one eye versus both eyes?

Thanks in advance, Stuart

Dear Stuart:

Cross dominance: Cross dominance comes in all sizes, shapes and forms. About 15% of men are cross dominant and about 25% of women. CD varies in strength too. Some, like you, are almost neutral in dominance. Others are very strongly CD. CD can also change with age, injury and illness. Most of the better baseball batters are CD. That gets the good eye nearest and clearest to the ball.

While CD may help a baseball player, it hurts the shooter. The advantage to shooting with both eyes open is that you will have better depth of field judgment and peripheral vision. Depending on the shotgun game, these attributes assume varying degrees of importance. They are least important in skeet, somewhat more so in trap and quite important in sporting clays.

If a new shooter is strongly CD, I always recommend switching handedness. With established shooters, of someone of mild, or wavering CD, I recommend three techniques. They are, in order of preference, 1) blink down; 2) patch and; 3) closed eye.

1) Blink Down: Blinking down simply means that both eyes are kept open as the target is acquired and distance and speed are estimated. Then the off eye is closed, the target reestablished and the shot delivered. This works particularly well at sporting clays where accurate assessment of distance and target flight while the gun is in an unmounted position is critical. In the premounted games of trap and skeet, blinking down often causes the target to "jump" when the eye is closed. This causes more trouble than it cures.

2) Patch: This is where a small piece of translucent Scotch tape, a bit smaller in diameter than a dime, is placed on the lens of the shooting glasses of the off eye. You need a friend to help you do this. Prepare the patch and mount the gun as if you were just about to shoot the target. Have the friend apply the patch so that it just obscures your off eye's view of the front bead of the

shotgun when your head and stock are in shooting position. That's it. The advantage of this method is that it still permits some peripheral vision and it requires no physical action on the part of the shooter. You just ignore it and go ahead and shoot. It works for all games, but is a little less convenient for those shooting sporting clays.

3) Closed Eye: Just close the off eye before your call for the bird. This is a simple method and works adequately for skeet where the gun is premounted and the target path known. It is less satisfactory for trap due to the loss of peripheral vision and the variability of the target. It is even less satisfactory at sporting clays.

Some trap shooters have placed a small side shield on the front of their barrels to shield the front bead from the off eye. This idea does not seem to have caught on.

A one eyed shooter will always be at a slight disadvantage in shotgun shooting. The disadvantage will vary with the game. That said, there are a number of people who have done very well indeed in spite of this handicap. You should not let it discourage you, but merely view it as another obstacle to be overcome.

Best regards,  
Bruce Buck  
Shotgun Report's Technoid