

REDUCING RECOIL

Hello Technoid :

Well just running through the net and found this page seemed like the perfect spot to find the answer for the dilemma I have. I own a BPS browning 20ga with a hollowed out stock. That is to say the stock has a oval shaped hole in it instead of just a hole for the mounting bolt. I use my guns for hunting and just have never found the time to pick up the technical words for the parts so please bare with me on that.

I have broke my neck twice and for the most part I am put together with metal plates but refuse to stop hunting because of this small setback. The problem I am having is with the recoil just can't seem to tame it enough so I can see straight for the second shot on that wily rooster that alludes the first shot sent.

I traded of my 12 ga thinking that if I went to 20 ga I could tame the recoil enough and be able to make it through a day of shooting. Well as you might imagine this was a grasping at straws move and the 20 ga really isn't a big difference from the 12 ga. Sometimes a person knowing full well the mistake he or she is making still just run through it then look back and well... you know the story. I would think most of us have been there once in there life.

Getting to the question: I have I looked into a Limbsaver recoil pad for this shotgun and none of the templates even came close to what I needed. I also looked into the Edwards Recoil Reducer, which would work if I installed a shim to accommodate the oval shaped hole in my stock but would it reduce the recoil as much as they claim. The butt on this particular shotgun is curved will this need to be cut straight for all applications? What are your thoughts on this? Do you know of any recoil pads that would work with this curved butt plate? The main question being I need the most bang for the buck when it comes to the recoil. The face slap is extremely important also its the difference between being able to shoot again and not, along with the recoil. I guess you could say I am stuck between a bang and a hard place. (sorry its late and it seemed to fit at the time)

But as you are aware being the Tecnoïd there are more different recoil pads then there are misquotes in North Dakota. On a fixed income I only have one shot at getting this right so I cannot try one after the another until I find one that will help me in my situation. I would imagine the good ones are probably out of my reach financially also but first I will find one that works then I will work on coming up with the money to buy one.

Any advise you can give me on this matter would be greatly appreciated. There are so many of these recoil pads out there at the local gun shops along with the gunsmiths it hard to know which one really does what they say it does. . But unfortunately I am finding out the one that the shops and gunsmiths in the area recommend is the one they sell. Not necessarily the one that would remove the most recoil and face slap.

Please let me know if you can help me with any of these questions.

T.

Dear T.,

For most shooters, reducing recoil is a help in shooting better. For some, it is a requirement to shoot at all. For those of us with injuries to protect, especially spinal ones, there are a lot of options. Some of them even work.

Here are some recoil reducing approaches:

1) reduce the amount of shot and it's speed.

In a 7# gun, 1 oz of shot at 1250 fps has 20.5 ft/lb of recoil energy. Reduce that load to 3/4 oz at 1150 fps and recoil goes down to 9.3 ft/lb. A reduction of more than half! Reducing the shell is far more effective than increasing the weight of the gun. Raising gun weight from 7# to 8# with the one ounce 1250 loads lowers recoil from 20.5 ft/lb to only 17.9 ft/lb. Hardly worth the effort. Recoil reducers like the Edwards basically only add weight to the gun. And they add it all in one place, which can upset the balance of a gun.

The problem with going to a lighter load in a field gun is that you still have to have enough oomph to kill the bird humanely. Still, you should think about the minimum that is required to kill the birds you hunt. Hint: big pellets don't require high velocities to work well. Certainly, in target shooting, you should use the lightest loads possible. Cheaper too.

2) recoil pads can help, but it depends

All the current recoil pads I'm familiar with will require you to cut the butt of your stock flat to eliminate the curve. It's not hard to do and whoever fits the pad for you can do it in a second. It also gives you a chance to alter your pitch if you wish to. As to one recoil pad being better than another, that's open for debate. The new ones made from Sorbothane are good and don't harden up the way the older pads did. On the other hand, pads like the Limbsaver and some others are so sticky that they are unsuitable for field use for many people. If you shoot with a premounted gun as in trap, they are fine, but that would certainly look funny hiking around with a premounted gun in the pheasant fields.

I think that the Pachmayer "Magnum" pad is a good compromise. They aren't too sticky after a bit of use and they are thick enough to do as much as any recoil pad can be expected to do. I don't have any way of measuring the recoil numbers of the particular pads, but I have noticed that the Pachmayer Magnum does cut down on shoulder trauma a bit.

But what you give with one hand, you take with the other. In order for recoil pads to work, they have to collapse slightly. This allows more gun movement along the face. If you are having face slap problems with a hard butt, they will be exacerbated by a collapsing recoil pad. That's why Browning's Cynergy had to go with a hump backed stock when it put a very thick recoil pad on the gun. The cheek is placed at the top of the comb's arch and the comb actually recoils away from the face as it moves back. The downside of this kind of stock is that it requires perfect cheek placement to work properly. In the field that is a sometime thing.

Another thing to remember when fitting a recoil pad, guns with long stocks kick less than guns with short stocks. That's because long stocked gun are generally placed more firmly into the shoulder pocket. Short stocks tend to be held more loosely, thus permitting the butt to build up a head of steam before it whacks you. Of course, the downside of a stock that is too long is that you'll hang it up on your coat when you try to mount it on a pheasant.

3) the best solution is not the cheapest.

If it were my neck that was at stake, I wouldn't mess around with a gun that could cause further injury. I'd get a soft shooting gas operated semi-auto. Pumps, O/Us and SxS guns are fixed breech guns and all have more perceived recoil than a gas auto. Actually, the total recoil of all guns is the same if they weigh the same and shoot the same shell, but the "perceived" recoil differs. Pumps, O/Us and SxSs give you their recoil very quickly like a punch or jab. Gas guns give you the same amount of recoil, but it is spread out over a longer period of time so it seems more like a push than a poke.

Currently, I believe that Beretta makes the best gas operated semi auto. Their 3901 model, based on the previous 390 action, is often sold for around \$700 in "big box" stores. The 391 model costs more and is very nice, but isn't really any better for practical field purposes.

Berettas are soft shooting, but they aren't the softest shooting gas guns. I've not shot every gas gun ever made, but Remington 1100s and Browning Golds have always seemed very soft shooting to me. But I don't think that they are quite as reliable as the Berettas are. Benelli makes an excellent semi auto, but they are inertia operated and don't reduce recoil as much as the gas guns do. Still, even if the Beretta isn't absolutely the softest gas gun, it's a whole ton softer than a fixed breech pump, even one as hefty as the BPS.

A big advantage to the Beretta and Browning gas guns is that their stocks can be easily adjusted with shims for a perfect fit. A properly fit gun may not have less actual recoil than another gun, but it will seem to kick less. It will certainly kick less to the face if it fits properly.

A new gun is certainly more financially onerous than just adding a recoil pad. You may be able to find what you want as a used gun and the trade-in value of the BPS would be helpful. I wish I had a perfect answer for you that was cheap and effective, but I don't. If I were in your shoes, I'd put my health first and wallet second.

Best regard,

Bruce Buck
Shotgun Report's Technoid