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I read with interest an earlier article you wrote about the position of your left hand on the forend and the angle your elbow should be positioned in. My biggest battle is trying to understand where to position my right elbow. I am right handed, but I see some shooters holding it horizontal or 90 degrees and some have it bent half way down to their waste or at 45 degrees. Is there a technically correct position to keep this arm?

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This is a question I must admit I battled with also throughout my career. There are two distinct schools of thought from two very different parts of the shooting world on the topic also. The American methodology is to push your elbow up as close to horizontal as possible. Their argument is twofold. Firstly it creates a nice pocket in your shoulder to consistently put the recoil pad of the gun into and second of all by pushing your arm up it tends to keep your head glued to the stock better, particularly on hard swinging targets. Watch any decent American Skeet shooter and you will see what I mean. The Italian technique involves keeping your right arm in a natural position at around 45 degrees. Generally the Italian technique involves quite a narrow stance which promotes the whole use of your body from the ankles up to swing for any target. They argue if the gun fits well enough you won't lift your head anyway. Remember the Italians do not have DTL or American Skeet to shoot in their country. They only have the faster disciplines of Trap and Skeet where fast and smooth gun movements are of the essence to shoot big scores and they argue this technique promotes these movements. Up until the very first time I went to Europe to shoot I admit I shot with the American technique both in DTL and Olympic Trap. After spending some time in Europe in the mid 1980's I decided the Italian technique was right for me. It isn't right for everybody, but what I found was that I suffered a lot more recoil, fatigue and less gun control on my second barrel if my right arm was too high. If you shoot a lower right elbow you are nearly forced to shoot flat recoil pads as a curved pad will not sit snug and even on your breast bone with the shape your body makes with your arm down. This is no real advantage or disadvantage as long as you are confident your gun mount is consistent under pressure. I suggest you go to a practice range somewhere with an open mind and try both. As I have said many times, clay target shooting is not a game of perfect. It is like golf. Do whatever works for you.

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