

July 2008

Can you explain to me the purpose of a mid sight for my barrel? I have recently tried a friend's gun that had one and I found it easier to aim at targets.

Gerry Mc Gregor, Tweed Heads, NSW

Gerry I worry a little bit about how you suggested the mid bead helped you aim the gun better. Mid beads are a great way of checking that you are consistently mounting the gun to your face in the same position each time. Remember in shotgun shooting there are two sights. The front one being the end of your barrel and the rear one being your eye. If all things are perfect the two sights are perfectly aligned. The mid bead can be a way to check that you are looking down the centre of the guns sighting plane BEFORE the target you are trying to obtain is in the air. It can be an aid also after you have completed your shot by quickly looking back down along the barrel to ensure that everything is still in a straight line. Often when a fast swing is required your head can become slightly off line if you have a poor fitting stock or a bad technique. The centre bead is a great training aid in this capacity. It should never be used when actually pointing the gun in the milliseconds before pulling the trigger.

What is the advantage of having a trigger mechanism that has leaf type firing springs as opposed to a mechanism that has coil springs?

William Muscat, Spotswood, VIC

Purists will argue that the flat or "leaf" spring as you describe it will give a much crisper trigger pull than that of a coil spring. There is always a trade off. I do believe the flat spring gives a crisper pull however many people feel the coil spring gives better long term reliability. The flat spring has certainly progressed a long way over the past couple of decades in terms of strength and reliability as anyone that owned an early model SKB, Perazzi or Beretta S04 will give testament . There will always be a valid argument that in shotgun shooting you do not need a precise trigger pull such as that required in an event like Free Pistol. Shotgun shooters tend to actually "slap" the triggers as opposed to pulling the trigger so exact engineering mechanics are not needed to quite the same level. I always have a bit of a laugh to myself when I hear shooters saying that they are getting their trigger pulls lightened from 3 ¾ pounds down to 3 ½ pounds. You may be able to pick the extra ¼ pound difference in a gun smiths workshop, but I doubt whether anyone in the middle of a competition could notice the change. If you can I believe you are concentrating far too much on the WRONG thing.

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