

July 2009

I am having trouble with a shotgun of mine that I believe shoots very high. To correct myself here I know the gun doesn't shoot high it's the height of the stock and where my face sits on the stock that makes it shoot high. I really don't want to shave wood off the stock to make it shoot lower, but I was told that by putting a larger sight on the end of the barrel this will make the gun shoot flatter. What do you think? Is this true?

Kori Singh, Balmain, NSW

The answer in theory Kori is yes, but in practice I am not as confident to agree. If you take two gun sights, the first being the size of a pin head and the second being the size of the bottom of a can of beer and stuck then on the end of the barrel you will undoubtedly get a shotgun shooting in two different points of impact. This is under the assumption you would still pull the trigger when you believe the target and the middle of your front sight are in the same "sight picture" relationship. Put simply this is because with a pin head front sight you would need to bring the barrel right up to the target when you pull the trigger because the pinhead will only be 1mm above the barrel. A larger sight the size of a beer can will mean that you will be pulling the trigger when you are actually 30mm under the target (a can having a 60mm diameter) therefore the shotgun will shoot its shot pattern at a flatter trajectory. It may in actual fact shoot even lower with a beer can size front sight because many people would use the top of the sight as their front reference point thus the trigger would be pulled 60mm under the target. At 40 metres this would equate to a huge point of impact difference.

That is the theory. The practicality is different. Large front sights promote less accurate shooting. In many cases an illuminated front sight, in my opinion, doesn't promote accurate shooting either as a glowing front bead can easily draw your eyes to the end of the barrel away from the target. Remember a front sight is only a reference point. You need to be aware where the end of your barrel is, but it is the target which you must see crystal clear.

I believe the most practical option you have Kori, considering you don't want to take wood off the top of the stock, is to get a "add on" rib and silicone it on top of your existing barrels rib with a normal size front sight on the end. This will lift the sighting plane up thus lowering your point of impact. It is cheap and if you want to remove the rib at a later date it won't hurt your barrels.

Questions: russell@russellmark.com.au