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I was told recently that a group of shooters were being used by the Institute of Sport as "Guinea Pigs" to see whether large doses of caffeine help clay target shooters. Does caffeine help?

Guinea Pigs may be a touch harsh in describing these shooters, especially as I was one of them! The Victorian Institute of Sport conducted three trial events over a month with about 12 different shooters in a controlled series of competitions. Personally I have tried the controlled use of caffeine for the past 12 months with interesting results, but I could not speak for everyone in the group. I have always thought that caffeine has helped me, but it has only been of recent times that I have tried larger doses under supervision and I must admit I had excellent results. There is some evidence to suggest that caffeine stimulates your arousal level therefore increasing your awareness and reaction time which in some clay target sports is of enormous benefit. Be warned though as it does have its side affects such as increasing blood pressure in some people and it can cause shakiness and headaches. The "fors and againsts" of this topic need to be discussed far beyond the small amount of space I have here, but it would be negligent of me to advice anyone to try this without seeking a doctors medical advice first. Even better still would be to wait until the Institute of Sport publishes its findings as I am sure that many of the shooters will have experienced vastly different reactions and results than I did.

Questions: russell@russellmark.com.au