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My father gave me a beautiful Browning shotgun which I want my son to use to shoot clay targets with when he gets older. I have tried it a few times, but the gun stock is definitely too high which I have confirmed by patterning the gun. The woodwork on the stock is excellent and I am told I may have to get some wood taken off the top of the comb which would be a shame. I was wondering what the alternatives are to make the gun shoot lower?

Anthony James – Houston, Wodonga, VIC

Anthony I had to read your question a few times. You said that the gun is for your son, but you have tried it and have pattern tested it yourself and decided the gun shoots too high. Is it too high for you or for your son? Everybody is different in how they mount the gun and how they position it on their face so it's a pretty safe bet that the gun will shoot a different point of impact for your son than it will for you. Not knowing how old your son is, but assuming he is at least 12 years of age and has the strength to hold and point the gun properly, why not get him to shoot some clays with it and then have him pattern the gun? You may get a real shock at the result. If you are still convinced that the gun needs to shoot lower then the best solution really is to simply shave some wood off the top of the comb until it shoots to the desired point. Try doing it a little bit at a time. I suggest experimenting with it in 2mm intervals. 2mm will equate to around 10 percent of the total shot pattern. Once you get to the correct height then there would be any number of gun smiths and stock makers here in Australia that could restore the original Browning type finish to the stock. If you absolutely do not want to touch the woodwork then the next best solution is getting a custom made add on rib which you can silicone on top of the existing rib. Again for every 2mm you had on to the ribs height you will decrease the pattern percentage by 10 per cent. If you decide you don't like it then it can be easily removed without damage. There are quite a few American companies that advertise on the internet that will custom make any rib height and width you desire. They are generally made from aluminum and cost up to US \$200. I have seen stocks that have been lowered by applying heat or hot oil around the grip and slowly pushed downwards with weight until the desired stock height is reached. I have also seen quite a few of these stocks bounce back to their original positions over time as well. Not all wood is capable of being bent properly. A more expensive solution is to get custom chokes fitted in the barrels that are made deliberately off centre to fire the shot pattern low. Finally there are those who swear that if you want the gun to shoot lower then simply put a larger front sight on the barrel. If you can imagine a front sight, for arguments sake, that is as big as a beer can. Considering most people should have a sight picture in their brain that tells them to pull the trigger the moment the top edge of their front sight reaches the underside of the target then the theory behind this alternative may work. The pattern will certainly shoot lower than one that was used with the same barrel with a front sight the size of a pin head. I must admit I have tried most things to alter shot patterns, but this last one I will leave to theory only.

Questions: russell@russellmark.com.au