

Shot Plan Checklists

My personal shot plan was made up of two segments: physical and mental. Here are the components of each segment:

Physical Checklist

- 1 Check that all muscles feel relaxed and watch the wind flags.
- 2 Check for consistent sling and butt-plate placement.
- 3 Close eyes for position balance and check natural point of aim.
- 4 Check for consistent cheek placement and pressure.
- 5 Check for consistent finger placement on the trigger.
- 6 Check the wind (through sights) last time.
- 7 Accept only a center hold for perfect sight picture. (In practice or a match, if the shot did not feel or look right at this point, I would run through the list again beginning with number one. If I did not have time to start over, as was the case in the finals, I would focus completely on my mental plan since I couldn't change the physical factors.)
- 8 Follow through.
- 9 Call the shot.

Mental Checklist

As well as a physical checklist, I trained myself to think certain thoughts on the line. These were thoughts I used before each shot to maintain my optimal performance state of mind. I would say the phrases inside quote marks to myself as the shot developed.

- 1 "I love to perform well in a match, I feel sharp and ready."
- 2 "The only important shot is the one in my rifle. It's the only one that exists for me to perform perfectly, and it's just one."
- 3 "My goal is to perform the 10." (This was my imagery cue to focus on what the perfect sight picture looked like. It also included my imagining the feel of a confident trigger squeeze.)
- 4 Shift awareness to wind (last time) and shade if needed.
- 5 "Now, get inside the 10." (These cue words helped me focus on bringing my movement down and also to keep the image of the perfect shot sharp in my mind.)
- 6 Patience. Here I had my total focus on sight picture, waiting for that equal ring of light. The only thing in my mind (somewhere back there) was the perfect sight picture, no words, just a feeling of being in the center.
- 7 Automatic rhythm, let it happen. Again, no words as I take the shot, just the anticipation of my sights going into the center and the gun goes off. These checklists may seem tedious to do every shot, but once the ingredients in the plan worked for me, they became memorized from practice and thought through in seconds. The plan also kept me consistent shot to shot, and focused on the things within my control. And once I made sure all the elements were utilized, I had no problem taking confident shots under any stressful situation.