

**"SMOKE SIGNALS "**  
***Blackpowder Muzzleloading***  
***By; Andre ( Graywolf ) Reed***  
***Sight Alignment***

You may have the best equipment; rifle or handgun, ball and patch combination, but you will not shoot well if your sight alignment and point of aim are not correct.

**Natural Point of Aim ;**

The natural point of aim is one of the most important aspects to achieving your goal of shooting that 10X.

Imagine a spring if you compress it, bend it, you use a small amount of force. When you release the force the spring will return to its natural state. Your muscles are much the same; they want to relax and return to their rest position, **natural state**. To check the natural point of aim put the rifle to your shoulder and get into your off-hand position. Then, close your eyes. Take two or three normal breaths. On the last one, exhale to your normal lung pressure, and hold while totally relaxing. Open your eyes and see if the sights are right on your aiming black; do not settle for just being on your target, the sights should be aligned exactly where you want them.

Your feet and body are facing ninety degrees from the target and your feet are approximately shoulder width apart. To adjust your natural point of aim, move the foot that is farthest away from the target (right foot for right handed shooters), the left foot is the pivot point and does not move. If your point of aim is to the right of the aiming point, you need to adjust the muzzle to the left. Simply drop the right foot forward a few inches. This will bring the muzzle to the left and you have adjusted your natural point of aim. If your position is to the left of the aiming point, adjust it by bringing the right foot backward. This will bring the muzzle of your arm to the right. You will need to check the natural point of aim after each adjustment. If your natural point of aim is too high or too low, it can be adjusted by bringing the feet closer together, lowering the natural point of aim, or moving the feet farther apart, raising the muzzle. Once you have established your natural point of aim, DO NOT MOVE YOUR FEET!! or you can start back from square one.

## **Aim ;**

Aiming is simply aligning the front and rear sights in the proper manner this involves three elements.

### **Open sights ;**

#### **Focus ;**

The eye cannot focus on two objects at different distances at the same time. ie; rear sight, front sight or sight and target. You can rapidly shift focus from one to the other and convince yourself you are focusing on both but your not. The proper focus is on the front sight post and not on the target.

#### **Sight Alignment ;**

Eye relief (distance from the rear sight and your eye) must be the same each and every time. It is recommended you shoot with both eyes open, closing the left eye puts a strain on the right eye, you could also experience a slight quiver in the muscles around the eye. I tried shooting with both eyes open and found it hard to focus, to overcome this I wear a frosted lens over my left eye.

When you look through the rear sight the front sight post is aligned with the notch of the rear sight, with an equal amount of light on each side of the front post and the vertical notch.. The top of the front sight post is brought up even with the top of the rear sight.

#### **Sight Picture ;**

Sight alignment dose not require an aiming point. It can be done on a blank wall. When you are trying to shoot at and hit a target you must add the next step **sight picture**. The most common sight picture used is the **six o'clock hold**. The sight alignment is correct and the aiming black is set on top of the front sight post the sights are adjusted for the bullet to hit the centre of the target.

This gives the shooter a defined point of aim.

Some shooters use a line of **white hold**, you hold just a little under the six o'clock position so there is a line of white between your front sight post and the aiming black. The problem with this is how much to show and keeping each shot consistent.

An other popular sight picture if the **centre hold**. The sight alignment being correct the top of the front sight post is placed in the **centre of mass** and the sights are adjusted so the strike of the bullet is set to point of aim, point of impact.

## **Aperture Sights :**

They say the first thing to go with age are the eyes, I started shooting with aperture sights long before my eyes started to go.

Aperture sights are far easier on the eyes; there is no need for constant focusing.

Sight alignment and sight picture are the same as previously discussed. There are three concentric circles, rear sight, front sight and aiming black. Simply aligning the three concentric circles having an equal amount of white around the aiming black ensures that the arm is centred.

To be able to shoot well you must have the courage to take the firearm down and start the shooting process over. Failure to do so will result in blurred vision, loss of mental concentration and sight picture and a tendency to snap the trigger.