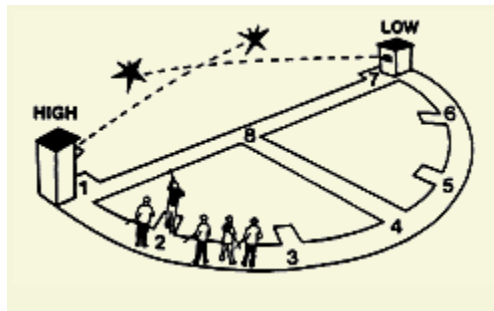


Skeet is a game of angles and mathematical formulas involving time, speed and distance, which translate into the necessity of shooting a certain distance ahead of each target so that shot string and target meet physically somewhere along the target's flight path, resulting in a "dead" bird.

This is known as **lead**, and the lead necessary for breaking each target changes by some amount from Skeet station to station because the shooting distances and angles change. And that's the challenge of the game!

At its most basic, a round of Skeet involves one box of 25 shells per shooter, which will be fired at eight **stations**, the usually concrete pads on which each shooter stands to take his turn. Normally, no more than five shooters, called a **squad**, are involved in a single round of skeet at one time. The shooters begin a round at Station 1 in front of the High House and progress around the arc to Station 7 in front of the Low House, ending at Station 8 exactly at the middle between the two houses.



Target shooting sequences at each station:

Stations 1 and 2: High House single, shot first; Low House single; High and Low House doubles, with the High House shot taken first. (Four shots at each of the two stations.)

Stations 3 through 5: High House single, shot first; Low House single. (Two shots at each of the three stations.)

Stations 6 and 7: High House single, shot first; Low House single; High and Low House doubles, with the **Low House** shot taken first. (Four shots at each of the two stations.)

Station 8: High House single, shot first; Low House single. If by now the shooter has missed no targets, the 25th shot is taken at the Low House.

Optional Shot: This, which would be the 25th shell for a shooter who has missed no shots through Station 8, is taken for a second try at the first target missed at any station.

NOTE: At every station the High House shot is taken first except on doubles at Stations 6 and 7, when you shoot the Low House target before the High House. Just remember that and you won't get confused over which house to shoot first.

Shooting ahead of a target:

One could stand and point the shotgun like a rifle at a certain spot ahead of the target in its flight path (gun point), then pull the trigger when the target reaches a certain point on its path (pre-intercept point) -- and break the target without ever moving the gun from its static position. Mathematically, it's just a time, speed and distance equation. The only problem is, it won't work in the real world, because on a practical basis no shooter could consistently know or time his shot at the exact gun point and pre-intercept point.

So the shooter must swing with the target and lead it by a certain distance to account for the time it takes to pull the trigger, the shell to fire and the shot string to travel into the target's path so the target runs into it.



There are three methods of leading a target as mentioned below.

Sustained, or maintained, lead: The shooter picks up the target in his peripheral vision as it emerges from the window, immediately begins moving ahead of it, adjusts for the correct lead distance and fires the instant that distance is seen, *keeping the gun moving after the shot*. This is the lead used by most Skeet shooters today.

Swing-through lead: The shooter allows the target to get ahead of the gun, swings through it and fires the instant he judges he has the correct lead, *keeping the gun moving after the shot*.

Pull-ahead lead: The shooter swings **to** the target when he sees it, then quickly pulls ahead to what he considers the correct lead and fires instantly, *keeping the gun moving after the shot*.

Notice that no matter what method is used, the shooter fires **instantly** when he sees the necessary lead. This is important because these targets are moving *fast* and offer little or no margin for tinkering around with minor adjustments.

The beginning shooter will likely anguish for some time over exactly which lead method is best for him, and only he can decide that, but there should be no indecision nor questioning the need to **keep the gun moving after the shot** (known as **follow-through**).

Without follow-through, no matter what lead method you use or what distance your lead, you'll almost certainly miss the target. It's called **stopping the gun**, and it probably accounts for more misses on a Skeet range than any other mistake. And, of course, you **must** be swinging the gun on the same horizontal plane as the target. Shooting over or under the target causes many misses and shooting **over** it accounts for most of those. **If you don't see the target on or just above the front bead of your gun, you're probably about to shoot over it.**

SUGGESTED HIGH AND LOW HOUSE LEADS AT EACH STATION							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
High: None	High: 1' - 2-1/2'	High: 4' - 4-1/2'	High: 4' - 4-1/2'	High: 4' - 4-1/2'	High: 2' - 2-1/2'	High: 10" - 12"	None: Cover each target and shoot
Low: 10" - 12"	Low: 2' - 2-1/2'	Low: 4 - 4-1/2'	Low: 4' - 4-1/2'	Low: 4' - 4-1/2'	Low: 1 - 1-1/2'	Low: None	

The amount of lead required to break a target is highly variable from shooter to shooter because it depends greatly on how fast the shooter swings the gun. Only with constant and consistent practice will you get the feel of how much lead on each station works best for you. When you break a target, try to remember the sight picture and lead that did it, then try to repeat it the next time on that target.

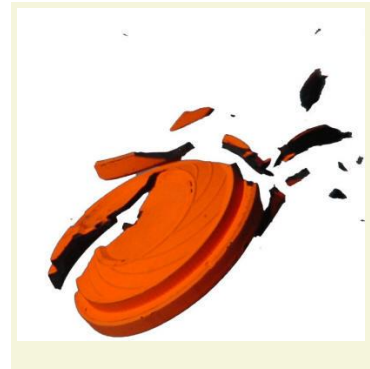
In general, try to break going-away targets before or near the center stake and let incoming targets go past the stake and come to you. There's no sense in trying to break an incoming target while it's still far away from you, when you can break it easily when it's nearby.

Station 8... Grrrrrrr...

The High and Low House targets from Station 8 are definitely tricky and guaranteed to frustrate the beginning shooter. At this station, you are a mere 18 feet from the target crossing point and must break each target before it passes the station or it's counted as a miss. And since you're also only about 20 yards from the window and the target is coming almost straight at you, it will be at and beyond you before you know it if you're not fully alert and prepared. Give yourself the maximum advantage on this close-in target by standing in the right-rear corner of the pad for the High House and the left-rear corner for the Low House.

Station 8 can be extremely daunting, but there is a way to avoid the angst and ease into this bugger gradually until you get the hang of it. Once you do, you'll wonder how you ever missed it because it's actually one of the easiest targets on the field.

How to learn Station 8: Don't start out shooting from Station 8. It's that simple. To learn the High House, for example, walk about halfway between Station 8 and the Low House and shoot it from there. Then as you begin breaking targets gradually move closer to Station 8 until you can break them from there. For the Low House, do the opposite.



For all Station 8 shots, start with the gun pointing about three feet outside the window on the target's flight path and look at the window. When the target appears, swing at and with it smoothly and **quickly**, cover it up and shoot **the instant** it's covered -- **and keep the gun moving**. The more open your choke is on this face-hugger, the better chance you'll have of breaking it. It can be broken fairly easily by an accomplished shooter with a modified choke -- or even a full -- but you should avoid any choke of tighter constriction than improved cylinder, at least while you're learning.

To shoulder or not to shoulder

Should you pre-mount the gun before calling for a target -- or should you use the unmounted gun method, pushing the gun five or six inches away from your shoulder and dropping the bottom of the butt just below the elbow? Virtually all the old-timers of decades ago started with an unmounted gun. Virtually all skeet shooters today start with a mounted gun. Only you can decide which works best for you. Try it both ways and decide for yourself.

International (Olympic) Skeet

International (Olympic) skeet is a variation of American Skeet and is the style shot in the Olympics. It has an eight-station format like American Skeet but with faster targets thrown at 72 meters (78.73 yards).

The shooter is required to hold the butt of the gun at hip level until the target is seen, which may be delayed for up to 3.5 seconds after the target is called for.



Single and double target sequences are slightly different from American Skeet, with a high single and one pair of doubles from Stations 1 & 2; high and low singles and one pair of doubles from Stations 3, 4 and 5 (on Station 4, the high bird must be attempted first in doubles); a single low and a double from Station 6; one pair of doubles from Station 7; a single high and a single low from Station 8. A round is 25 targets, with no option shot. The shot charge is restricted to 24 grams (approx. 7/8 oz.), with any safe powder charge. For tournaments, all shells must be of the same type and load.

Safety and Skeet range etiquette

When you're not on a station getting ready to shoot, **ALWAYS** keep the receiver of your gun open so there'll be no question in fellow shooters' minds whether it's loaded or not. Open your O/U or the bolt on your semi-auto or pump shotgun. It's just the safe and sensible thing to do. Also, you won't look like an amateur and draw the scorn of other shooters. **NEVER** load your gun until you're on a station and it's your turn to shoot.

Clearly call for the target so the puller won't have to strain to hear you. Occasionally, a shooter will have his own pet word to call for a target, but the traditional words are **PULL!** for the High House and **MARK!** for the Low House. However you call for the target, do it in a strong, commanding voice. Otherwise, don't blame the guy with the switch in his palm for giving you a slow pull.

And if you're the guy with the remote release, focus your attention on the current shooter and not the other shooters' chit-chat going on around you.

Have fun and best of luck to you at a great shotgun game!

