

The Recoil Systems XPad - reducing felt recoil

by DG Crofts



A Recoil Systems flyer, showing some of the product range.

It was not that I believed I suffered from felt or perceived recoil, but I had noticed in the past 12 to 18 months an increase in bruising on my right shoulder on the day following when I had shot 100 to 150 clay targets with my 12-gauge shotgun. It was only slight bruising, but it was still there.

I usually use standard 1250 to 1300fps 28g target loads through my 12-gauge Trap gun for all of my clay target shooting. The gun in question, a Miroku Mk 38, was fitted with a ventilated pad at the factory and has overbored barrels as standard, so recoil should not be a problem, should it? Well, I'm no expert on the subject but coupled with the bruising, I had noticed that my shooting performance dropped off quite substantially once I had shot over 100 targets and none of us want that to happen.

Reducing felt recoil has a number of benefits for the shooter. It can help to lessen fatigue, especially during a big competition when many shots are fired and cut the risk of physical problems, such as brachial plexus injuries, as well as psychological issues, such as flinching and trigger freeze.

A number of options are available to the

shooter to achieve this, including barrel porting, barrel overboring, the use of a heavier gun, mechanical recoil reducers and more. In fact, it is surprising how many options are available when you start looking.

As mentioned, the barrels on my Miroku were already overbored and for me personally, barrel porting is a no-no, despite the benefits that many experts and experienced shooters attribute to ported barrels. I know there are plenty of fellow shooters who love barrel porting and who have no doubt whatsoever in its recoil-reducing benefits. However, after attending fox drives in my younger days with my father, and seeing the old side-by-sides with rust holes through the barrels that some of the farmers used to turn up with on those days, a shotgun barrel with any hole in it just doesn't sit right in my mind. So, I decided that my first response to this problem would be to change the recoil pad for an aftermarket brand with better recoil absorbing qualities than the factory original.

After doing some research by talking to fellow shooters, reading magazine articles and trawling through the various pads available at the local gunshops, I thought

I had narrowed the choice down to two renowned brands. However, when surfing the internet, I came across a company from Essex in the United Kingdom called Recoil Systems.

Recoil Systems was established by David Izzard, a top-class international FITASC sporting shot who has been a member of the England and Great Britain shooting teams. David started suffering from recoil himself during the 1990s and his competition performance faltered greatly due to the results. Being an engineer by trade, he decided to research the issue of recoil and to find a better way to alleviate the effects of such.

David's first product was the ISIS Recoil Damper launched in 2001. He now produces a number of recoil-mitigating products that are used by many shooters worldwide. The range includes the ISIS 2 Light Recoil

Damper, Contoured Comb Raisers, the original Green Pad, the improved XPad and an Adjustable Green Pad. Peter Wilson had a Recoil Systems Green Pad fitted to the Perazzi he used to win the Double Trap gold medal at the 2012 London Olympic Games.

The pads are available in various thicknesses for right- and left-handed shooters and after speaking to David over the phone, I decided upon the ISIS XPad Surefit, the latest development of the original Green Pad with a thickness of 23mm. The pads

are actually contoured to fit your shoulder, which aids recoil absorption and gun-fit. This contouring was noted as early as 1910 by WW Greener in his notes on gun-fit, when writing about the legendary live pigeon shooter Dr WF Carver's shotgun in *The Gun and its Development* 9th Edition. According to Greener, the sole of Carver's stock was actually "chamfered so as to fit squarely against the muscles of his shoulder". Other useful information about gun-fit is readily available in Michael

Yardley's 2006 *Gunfitting* 2nd edition.

The ISIS XPad Surefit's pad has a leather facing fitted to it as standard to minimise any drag as you mount the gun into your shoulder. The recoil-reducing core uses Recoil Systems' Lamina technology of two layers of elastomeric polymer to provide recoil mitigation through controlled compression, absorbing the recoil energy over a longer period of time, which in theory makes the gun more stable and more comfortable to shoot. I found the pad



Masking tape applied before fitting.



Initial fitting of the XPad.



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The Recoil Systems XPad

easy to fit and it shaped well with the tools I had to hand. The polymer material of the pad is green in color. If you aren't keen on the green, a black permanent marker is included with the pad so you can blacken the pad if required.

Once I had successfully fitted the pad, it was time to do some testing. While I should have probably shot a round or two with the original pad, then swap over to the XPad for comparison, I simply just shot the Miroku Mk 38 with the XPad fitted. I shot a couple of rounds with my usual 28g standard target loads and I found the gun smooth to handle, quick and easy

to mount, with repeated consistent butt placement into the shoulder.

After giving the 28g a go, I still had a stock of the 32g Winchester AA target loads in 3- and 3.5-dram equivalents (the older AA300 and AA350 shells). I certainly could feel the difference between the 28g loads and the 50 or so 32g 3-dram loads used, but they were still very comfortable to shoot. I switched to the 32g 3.5-dram loads and boy do they give you a boot! But, with the XPad, even after shooting 50 shells with these heavy loads, the gun was still reasonably accommodating to deal with. Also, I had no visible sign of any

bruising on my shoulder during or after the test, or even the following morning.

I was very impressed with the Recoil Systems XPad. In my opinion, it did everything I expected it to and a little more. In fact, I was so pleased with the product, that I had one fitted to my Krieghoff when I recently upgraded my competition gun. With its recoil-absorbing qualities and reduced chance of grabbing or snagging on clothing when being mounted, I believe the pad to be absolutely perfect for all gun-down, as well as gun-up, clay target disciplines. The pad is also ideal for heavy-recoiling big or dangerous game rifles, where not being able to achieve a quick and sure mount could cost you more than losing a target.

If you are searching for reduced recoil or just a smart-looking recoil pad, or you would like to know more about these products including pricing and shipping to Australia, then contact David or Debbie at Recoil Systems in the UK on david@recoilsystems.com or +44 (0) 1763 837140 and I'm sure they will be able to help you. Gunshops or importers interested in becoming distributors of these products are also encouraged to contact Recoil Systems. For further information, visit www.recoilsystems.com ●



The XPad before grinding.



The XPad after grinding.



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