

THE EYES HAVE IT.....OR NOT!

Every shooter has had much, maybe way too much, advice given to him or her about eyewear types, where to look for targets, colors of lenses, and on and on. Me, too.

Now we come to a few weeks ago. After several months of constant nagging from the Treasurer (my wife) I checked myself into a vision clinic. It seems that she has been seeing things like deer along the roadways, birds flying by, and, oh yes, automobiles blowing horns.

What to my wondering eyes should appear (I could not resist that. Please forgive me)? I have cataracts! Yup. In both eyes. I knew that something was amiss because I could not see the scrolling across the bottom of our 48 inch television since last summer.....or was it the summer before last?

I submitted to several tests that tell me that I need a surgical repair. There is no available special cream or exercise to get rid of cataracts.

So, when did YOU last have an eye exam? A real one? With a doctor?

Don't need one, you say? You can see just fine? Ask your spouse, or shooting pals, or the guy you almost hit from behind the other day at the Post Office.

There are multiple reasons to have regular annual eye exams. I shall list a few for your consideration and possible remedy.

My dominant right eye has the most severe cataract. That explains why I was missing some targets without a reason.....other than just missing. My non dominant left eye was taking over control without permission because it could see better, thereby becoming dominant. That does not bode well for good shooting.

Eyes see motion. When that motion is obscured by darkness, somebody's fist, OR a cataract, it takes longer to see a blurred target. That does not lend itself to good shooting either.

Then there are the different speeds of targets, especially those thrown at the same time. By golly, I can distinctly remember having difficulty with one or the other. If I could see the first slow target, the following fast one would beat my eyes. Then I had to chase it trying to catch up.

How about our natural tendency to look at the barrel when we cannot see easily? Our minds will automatically move our eyes to the fastest motion in the visual scene. When we cannot see the flying target 30 yards away, we look at the gun to find our way. Does that

sound like a good plan for attacking targets?

Let us move for a minute to hunting. Ducks for example. I defy almost anyone (my uncle Louie excluded) who can tell a female mallard from a black duck with the eyes that I am wearing as I type these words. Shucks, I could not read the big E on the eye chart, but, of course, I knew what it was because I had it memorized for nearly fifty years! My mother didn't raise any dummies. Or did she?

Our eyes were designed by an expert to work as a team. When one of them does not know where to go it creates confusion for the good eye. That could be a reason why the second bird of a pair can be so hard to find.....even when a person is looking directly at it.

At our shooting academy we teach that the eyes must move to a second target BEFORE the guns does in order NOT to create a confusing picture for the brain. When one or more of those eyes sees split targets, multiple targets, blurry targets, shadowy targets, or no target at all it is time for a major move.....to the ophthalmologist.

My cataracts showed themselves in only one year. How do I know? I have an annual eye exam every January. When is the last time you had your eyes examined? If it has been several years maybe you ought to consider getting your head examined also.

After all is said and done, you cannot hit what you cannot see...when it comes to flying targets, that is. It can be all too easy to hit what you cannot see in all other aspects of life.

Keep both eyes open. Get them checked out regularly.

Until next time.....

THE FOX