Distance judging / target routine

Step 0 – Observe group ahead – Paces/ how long it takes to walk to target/ identify dead ground

Step 1 – Rough estimate – Quick first impression how far does it look

Step 2 – Look through binoculars, find 'kill' zone and identify aiming references from animal colour/muscle bulges etc. Also observe 8-ring – is it safer to go high/low if you misjudge distance

Step 3 – 'Ground count' in increments of 2 / 5 / 10m. Get confident in judging shorter milestones accurately, then progress from there to the actual target distance. Practice between targets as you walk round the course

Step 4 – 'Owling' - Move head from side to side to identify hidden ground and find the midpoint. Judge the distance to the midpoint, and double it to confirm or modify your ground count estimate

‘Owling’

Looking where you think halfway point is, move your head from side to side and you should see the target move in your peripheral vision the same amount that you are moving. Judge the distance to this mid-point, and double it to give the target distance. (Note, any error in placing the midpoint or your estimating the distance to the midpoint will be doubled)

If you have placed the midpoint incorrectly:

a) If you have placed the midpoint shorter than half-way, the target will move more than expected
b) If you have placed the midpoint longer than half-way, the target will move less than expected

With the target moving proportional to how you are moving, look at the ground for the point which doesn’t appear to move, which will be the midpoint.

To locate the ‘still’ point, when you move your head to one side:

a) Moving your head to the LEFT, anything shorter than halfway will move to the right; anything beyond halfway will move to the left
b) Moving your head to the RIGHT, anything shorter than halfway will move to the left; anything beyond halfway will move to the right

Identifying dead ground

Using ‘owling’, look at how the ground you can see up to (I’ll refer to as point x), reacts against the next bit of ground/the target you can see.

If Point X barely moves in relation to the target/next bit of visible ground, then there is likely only 1-2m hidden

If Point X moves a large amount in relation to the target, depending on how much it moves, make a judgement of how much ground is hidden

This can also be used when trying to work out where halfway is, when the midpoint is located in dead ground. Moving your head so the target is moving proportional to you, make a judgement of how much Point X moves, when you are looking for the ‘still’ point

To practice:

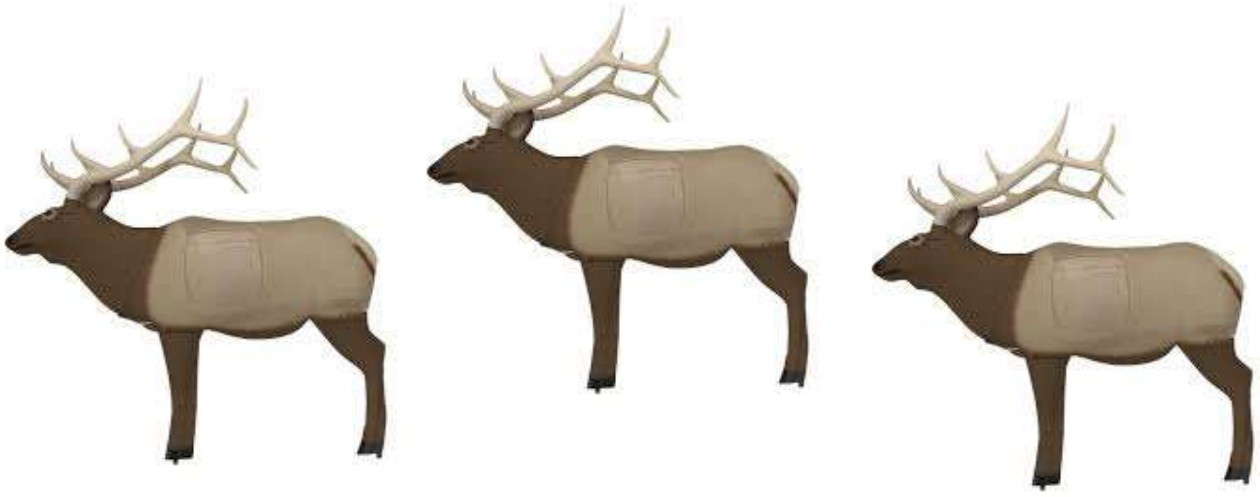
Set a target out, and at halfway place a ball (or any object) and a long piece of tape/long stick extending a couple of metres in front and behind it in a straight line (in line with the target). Staring at the ball, move your head from side to side to ‘learn’ how the target should move when you have the correct halfway point. Also observe how the tape moves in relation to the ball. Try this at different target distances, moving the ball and tape to the midpoint each time.

Then move the ball and tape several metres shorter/longer than halfway, and staring at the ball, observe the difference in the animal movement

Once you’re used to the tape movement, try it with just the ball, and observe the grass/ground in front/behind it

Eventually, do it without any object at halfway, picking a point on the terrain

To practice dead ground, a large piece of card can be used to block the view of the ground between it and the target. Make some markings on the top edge to give you a reference to see how much it moves in relation to the target, position it at different distances away from the target to hide different amounts of ground, to learn how much it will move at different distances



Past midpoint

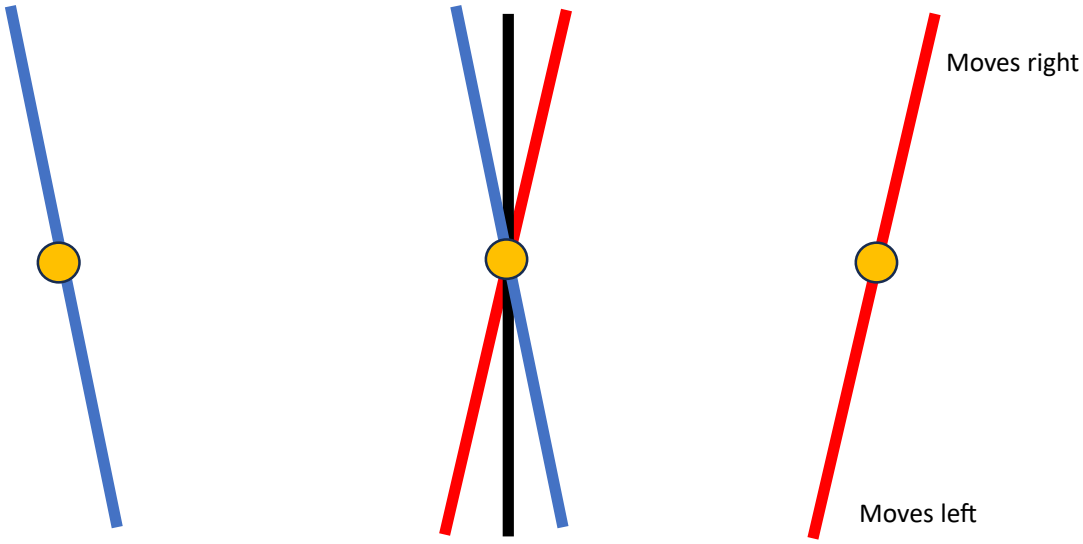
Moves left

Mid point

Stays still

Short of midpoint

Moves right



Moves right

Moves left

Move head Left Right