

separated for storage or transport.

As his hunter is sitting down to shoot, Lambrechts takes the bottom half off one of the legs and sets it vertically on the ground, holding it with one hand. The shooter uses the hand as a forearm support, moving it as needed to adjust elevation. Lambrechts grips the remaining legs of the shooting sticks with the same hand, the ends angled down to the ground to prevent sideways movement of the vertical stick. He can be set up and ready in less time than it takes the hunter to sit down and raise the rifle.

The negative to this system is it only leaves him one hand free for protecting his ears. He plugs the ear closest to the muzzle. Lambrechts is a grown man and can make his own decisions, but that's something I wouldn't do. I suffered some hearing loss in my youth from shooting and from working with loud machinery without hearing protection. For many years now I haven't fired a shot or been around other shooters unless both ears are protected.

When hunting big game I use plastic disposable plugs, the type you roll up and stick in the ear canal. Even though they are inexpensive and the technology is rather basic, in my experience they work quite well at blocking muzzle blast.



Using a companion's shoulder as a rest is both quick and reasonably steady. Again be very aware of muzzle control and of ear protection.

As always when shooting, firearm safety is the first priority. The shooter must be absolutely certain about muzzle control, never letting the firearm point anywhere near the shooting companion. Of course this applies in all cases. I don't mean to suggest there are degrees of acceptable safety standards. They apply always and everywhere. Just remember in these cases you are operating in close proximity to your companion, at a time when game is in view and the tension level is likely high.

The other safety issue, as has been

touched upon, relates to muzzle blast and ear protection. In all these positions the support person is closer to the muzzle than the shooter and needs to really pay attention to keeping his ears covered. Personally, I'd use both plugs and muffs, and I would further use my hands to press the muffs down tightly.

Break The Brakes

Lambrechts mentioned if his hunter's rifle has a muzzlebrake, he would not use these support positions at all. Like just about every guide I've talked with,

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