

# Non-threatening Hands-on Instruction

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A major element of shooting is stance. When working with shooters, particularly beginners, instructors frequently must use their hands to position them or correct their form or assisting them with equipment and shooting clothing. Even though close contact with the shooter is Essential for effective instruction, the instructor must be careful to avoid any action that could appear improper or cause the student anxiety. A few simple actions can ensure a working relationship between instructor or coach and student without any question of anxiety or impropriety.

Respectful, non-threatening treatment of shooters begins with demonstration. Use a junior leader or an assistant to demonstrate proper posture or position and then as to how instructors will handle/assist shooters to correct their posture or position. By telling the shooter what you are about to do, you can further reduce his or her anxiety. Ask permission before touching and tell the shooter you are going to push his or her torso forward, raise an

elbow or reposition a hand. The posture of your hands when contacting the student can also ease anxiety. Except in an unsafe situation where immediate and decisive action is required, it is seldom necessary to “grab” a student or the firearm. When your hands are held relatively rigid with the fingers straight and the thumbs resting on the top of the hands, they are much less threatened. Pressure from the palms of flattened hands (fingers not curled) can accomplish most positioning and controlling needs. This is called “Non-threatening Hands On Instruction.”

## Non-Threatening Hands On Instruction

- Positioning or Stance
- Equipment & Shooting Clothing
- Always Respectful
- Use Demonstrations
- Request Permission to touch
- In response to students need
- Avoid Breasts, Buttocks, and Groin

- Should Be Open & Not Secretive
- Governed by Age
- Always Appropriate When Safety of the Individual or Group is At Stake

## Examples and Advice

Assisting with coats, shooting vests or shooting coat or jacket. There are several adjustments that can be made on a shooting jacket/coat that help the fit and performance of the individual. As we teach in instructor training there are appropriate methods and inappropriate ways of non-threatening hands on instruction or assistance. Utilizing same gender assistance or students helping students may be the most appropriate for the situation. Age of participants, gender, and individual permissions are also factors that must be considered. The one exclusion is when the immediate safety of the individual or others is at stake.