



Proper configuration of a Service Rifle Sling

By Konrad Powers & Jeff Marienthal

New shooters using a Service Rifle for the first time have a lot to learn. Things like getting a consistent sight picture, learning the match process, and getting all their shots on their own target are certainly important. But in coaching newbies to this game, we have found a fundamental skill that is often incorrectly applied.

Properly configuring a Service Rifle sling is not overly difficult or time consuming. Even so, very few new shooters (and some experienced ones) know how to do it. Whether your choice is a web sling or leather, this accessory has a job to do in helping you reach your shooting goals.

NRA Highpower rules state that any Service Rifle can only use a leather or web sling. Some may argue that one is better than the other but they all really do the same job. The sling, at least in sitting and prone, serves to support the weight of the rifle and pull the buttstock into your shoulder. When properly configured any sling will accomplish this, regardless of the frills that some may insist upon.

These instructions are not the only way to configure a Service Rifle sling, although they do represent a tried and true method that will make the sling function as it is supposed to. The instructions are written from the point of view of the right-handed shooter. Lefties would reverse the left/right instructions.



Leather Sling

The leather sling is probably the most popular form of Service Rifle sling. There are several makers of these slings such as Turner, Tam, and Weller. Regardless of who made it, when correctly configured, any of these slings will do its job.

1. Arrange the sling on the rifle according to this photo. Note how the hooks (or frogs) face towards the rifle when the sling is in the parade position (attached to both sling swivels). The two leather keepers are situated just above the adjustment hook.



2. While in a sitting position, place the rifle in front of you with the muzzle up and the pistol grip pointing away from you. Let your right forearm keep the rifle from falling over while you hold the sling slightly away from the rifle as shown.



3. Take the part of the sling's lower loop that is closest to the rifle and twist it to the left so that you are facing the opposite side of the lower loop.



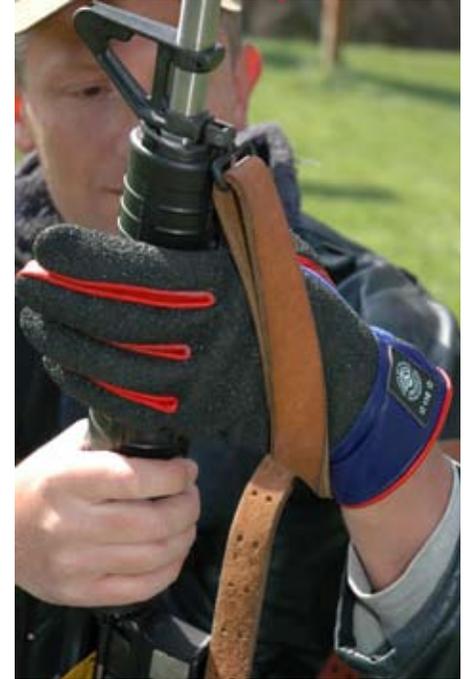
4. Now take your left hand and put it through the lower loop. Bring the lower loop to your upper arm until it is placed in a position that you are comfortable with.



5. To tighten the sling against your arm, pull on the part of the upper loop that is closest to your right arm. You may have to tighten and rotate your sling several times so that the keepers are positioned where you want them on your arm.



6. The lower loop should now be wrapped around your arm with the two leather keepers holding the loop together. The hook should be pressed into the top keeper so that the loop does not open under tension. Push the sling away with the back of your left hand and put your hand where your arm length dictates on the rifle's fore-end. The sling should now push flat against the back of your hand.



7. This front view shows how the sling wraps around the back of the hand.



8. This view shows the left side of the final position.

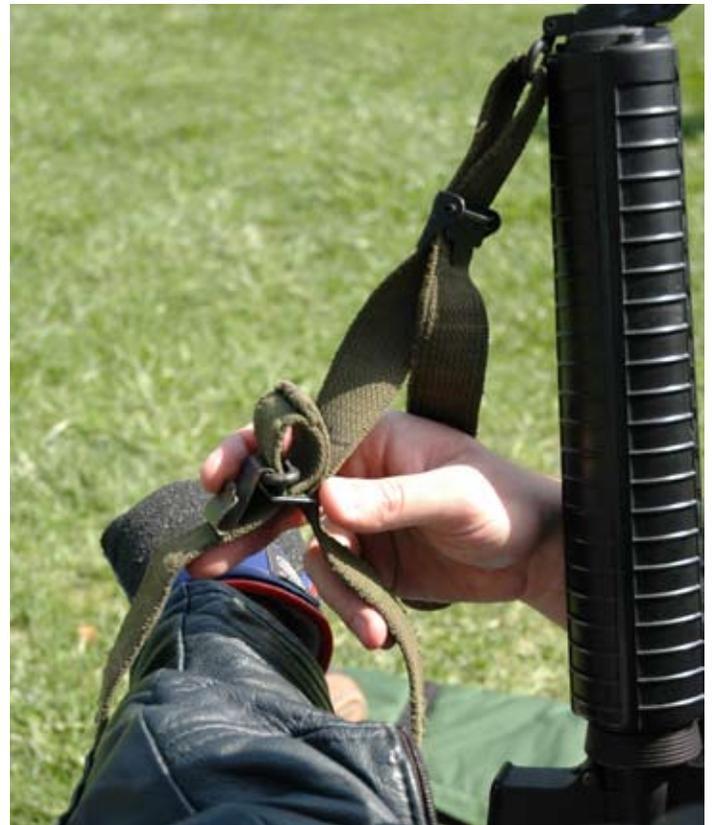


9. This is the right side.

Web Sling

While the leather sling is more common, the no-frills web sling can do the same job for less money. The cotton web slings are cheap, robust, and require no maintenance.

1. It's important to configure the loop of the web sling correctly. Pull the loop out as shown in the photograph. Don't worry about how far. The loop should be big enough to put your hand through.



2. While in a sitting position, place the rifle in front of you with the muzzle up and the pistol grip pointing away from you. Let your right forearm keep the rifle from falling over while you hold the sling slightly away from the rifle. Take the sling's open loop that you created and twist it to the left so that you are facing the loop's opposite side as shown.

3. Take your left hand and put it through the loop. Bring this loop to your upper arm until it is placed in a position that you are comfortable with.



4. To tighten the sling on your arm, just grab the strap and pull away from your bicep as illustrated in the photo. Before tightening, it might be best to arrange the sling so the buckle is towards the outside of your arm. Then, when the sling is tightened, it moves closer to the center of your bicep.



5. Push the sling away with the back of your left hand and put your hand where your arm length dictates on the rifle's fore-end.



6. The sling should now push flat against the back of your hand.



7. This view shows the left side of the final position.



8. This is the right side.