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## Suma Shirur: Lockdown best time for shooters to prepare themselves physically

Competitive shooters can make the most of self-isolation by working on muscle memory for optimal performance, says Suma.

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In self-isolation, shooters can practise drills like wall-holding, says Suma.

**Suma Shirur**, high-performance coach with the Indian junior rifle team, feels competitive shooters can make the most of self-isolation during the current lockdown by building up physically, wherever they are at present. The intention is to work on muscle memory so it is easier to make the transition to **shooting** when training and competitions resume after the prolonged pause.

"As of now, we don't know when the situation will be under control and shooters can get back to training. It is also true that active shooters are so busy with competitions that time to work on other aspects is rarely available. They now have the time to get the body ready, using various options available like wall-holding," noted Suma, the 10m air-rifle world record holder (Asian Shooting Championships in 2004) and Olympian (Athens, 2004).

### 'Useful tool'

She explained that in wall-holding, a dot is marked on a wall at a certain height. The weapon is held as close as possible, bringing into focus every part of the body used in shooting action, like a simulation exercise. "Wall-holding builds core muscles which come into use during actual shooting. Even in normal days, we do 45-minute wall holding. Now when shooters have the time, this is a useful tool to strengthen the core," she said.

Wall-holding is practised worldwide by top shooters, informed Suma. "Live shooting on the target is one part of the sport. Apart from that, in order to build skills there are different training exercises. This method helps in developing a constant inner position and can be done before/after training. I feel that when the shooters are able to do it at home, they are in touch with the muscle memory required in actual shooting."

She added: "The duration depends on how each one feels, it increases or decreases. Once we are able to sail through this period (self-isolation), the ranges are open and shooting actually starts, it will need eight to 10 days to get things back. The skills come back to us, it is very important to keep the body ready. I think this (lockdown) is the best time to really work on yourself physically."

### **Pending work**

Suma was in New Delhi for meetings and the Olympic trials held by the NRAI for Tokyo 2020, in wake of the cancellation of the World Cup. She returned home on March 19 to spend time with her family. For her, time away from the sport is a chance to clear pending work at home. "For the last two years, travelling with the national juniors to competitions and working with State associations kept me busy. I am trying to make the shooting range at home up to the standards. I can keep in touch with the sport, my son has also taken up shooting, so it will be of help to him."

Suma is the founder of the Lakshya Shooting Club at Karnala Sports Academy range, Panvel, where the non-residential **Khelo India** shooting academy is based. The Khelo India shooting trainees will return when the nationwide lockdown ends.

The junior shooters keep Suma updated about the efforts in self-isolation. "Zeena Khitta (National champion 10m air rifle), Hriday Hazarika (Junior World Cup 10m air-rifle gold medallist), Shahu Mane (10m air-rifle silver at the Youth Olympic Games) are among the shooters who send me their videos," said the national juniors rifle coach.