



In The End, Comfort Is Everything

A long sit on stand doesn't have to be hard and uncomfortable.

I couldn't move, and hadn't been able to for much of the morning. I was sitting at the base of a huge water oak in a somewhat open hardwood river bottom. From first daylight, I had a deer within sight of my ground position almost constantly. My scouting had paid off. The deer trail that ran in front of my position along the river bank was a highway of deer movement. So far, I had spotted 12 does, a spike and a young 8-point buck. As exciting as it was, I knew I couldn't stay there much longer. A stick under the cushion I was sitting on felt like a four-inch water pipe. The cushion was not waterproof, and my behind was wet and cold as well. My legs were numb. I had no other choice but to stand up!

As I stood, I saw the buck raise his head. He had been just out of sight of my sitting position, feeding his way toward me on the trail. He whirled and ran. No chance for a shot. If only I had waited a few more minutes, that 10-point would have been mine.

This happens many times each hunting season, whether it be deer hunting, spring gobbler hunting or summer predator hunting. Long hours on a hunt require us to stay seated and still, to appear as part of the landscape, in order for game to come within shooting range. We spend lots of money on the latest camo, top-quality optics, long-range rifles and the finest of cover scents — but often we don't give much thought to what keeps us still on the stand: In a word, "comfort." If we aren't comfortable during those long hours of waiting, we move, twist, stand up and wish we were somewhere else. It's those movements that often turn a successful setting into an unsuccessful event.

Meeting The Butt Guru

Recently, an afternoon of coyote hunting was ruined when the ill-designed cushion I had carried along let gravel feel like knife points on my posterior. Twice, the pain forced me to move when I had coyotes approaching. It cost me two opportunities. I went home that night promising myself a new, well-designed cushion for future hunts. This promise led me to David Robinson, a man who is in the comfort business and studies hunters' posterior anatomies to determine how he can make a cushion that will keep a person comfortable for hours on a stand.

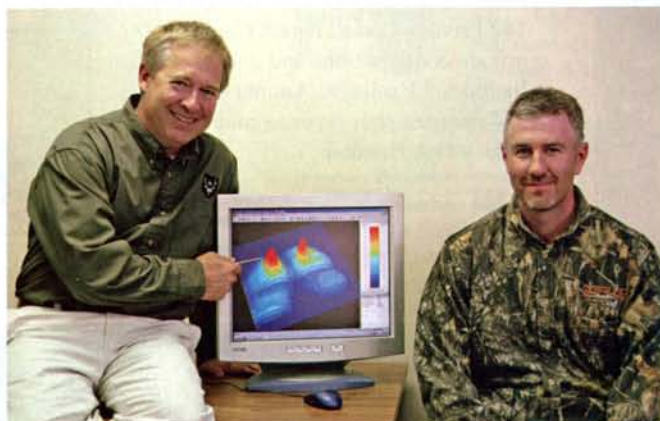
Robinson, president of a company called Hunt Comfort Cushions (www.huntcomfort.com), uses his computer background to study what is going on when hunters sit on hard tree-stand seats or the ground, using poor-quality foam or air cushions for long periods of time. He uses this information in the design of cushions that his company manufactures.



An uncomfortable hunter is not a still hunter, and anything that makes you move will likely spook game.

The Pressure Map Test

Comfort, in this case, is described as the amount of or lack of pressure on the buttocks or back when a person is sitting. Hunt



Hunt Comfort's pressure-map test, demonstrated by David Robinson (left) and a friend, shows where pressure is concentrated when a hunter is sitting down.

Comfort has a computer-read Pressure Map Test that shows, in color, the amount of pressure that various cushions (or no cushion at all) exert on the sitting hunter. Less pressure means more comfort and, often, less numbness in the legs. Also, the tests show how evenly the pressure is distributed. Robinson and staff are constantly testing hunters of various weights and builds to improve the cushion's design.

This testing has helped lead the company into making some of the

most comfortable cushions available to deer and turkey hunters.

High Quality Foam Plus Gel

According to Robinson, Hunt Comfort cushions, such as the FatBoy, are made from two layers of quality medical-grade polyurethane open-cell, highly resilient foam. The outer layer is made from one-inch Intelligel gel. The foams work in conjunction with the gel surface to provide even support and a comfort feel. The cushion is covered with a waterproof fabric



A good cushion should be easy to tote and be made of high-quality foam, and it might have a layer of gel padding for extra comfort.

called Comfort-TEX that gives in to the seat, helping to reduce harmful shear effects on the skin. The fabric comes in several camo patterns.

Finally, the FatBoy is a generous size, measuring 14x16x3 inches — large enough for the full-grown hunter.

Low-quality cushions are made from cheap, often firm, low-density packaging foam. The cushion cover is a fabric that does not give and can be abrasive to the skin. These cushions have a short life, usually about one year, and bottom out after hard use due to the foam losing its memory and not coming back into shape. Many are not waterproof. They are usually inexpensive, and might be okay for a dove field or other short-term hunts.

Selecting A Cushion

Going into a retail store, pulling a cushion off the shelf and squeezing it is not the best way to select a



The cover of a cushion should be waterproof to protect it from the weather.

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"Early December, 2005 we had a customer whose house had burned down. When we arrived at his house there was just a sink & safe standing there on the slab. We took the safe back to the shop to open it. The guy was crying thinking about his grandfather's guns. The guns that were in the Sack-Ups had no damage whatsoever. The guns that were unprotected by Sack-Ups had severe water damage."

"Also at Friends of the NRA dinner I tossed out my store gun sacks in the audience. That was almost a year ago. They are still coming into my store with my logo. I got to tell ya if you haven't got your logo on the Sack-Ups, you need to get it on."

Gene & Cindy Thome
Bear Mountain Sports
Northern California

"I just got back from Texas on an exotic hunt. The last evening of the hunt, I shot a big axis buck. With hurry of day getting loaded up I forgot to clean my gun. I just put my gun in my Sack-Up. I hadn't even taken the primer out of my gun. After a two day trip back home I pull my \$2,500.00 Muzzle Loader and the gun looked like I had detailed and cleaned it. If you want a true protection, quality product to protect your gun, you need to have it in Sack-Ups."

Cabot Benton
Gamemasters Outdoors TV
& Good Ole Boys Outdoors TV

"A couple of years ago as I came in from duck hunting it was raining quite heavily. When we left for home I put my gun in the dry box on the boat thinking it would be safe. I came back out a few days later I was sick at what I saw; 4 inches of water had blown into the box totally covering the gun. I thought the gun had been ruined. To my surprise Sack-Ups did its job of protecting my gun, no rust inside the barrel and receiver."

"The reasons I like them: Light weight silicone treated, no zippers like on vinyl cases with sheepskin lining if the zipper gets hung. The duck hunter will break that zipper."

Mike Moses
East Coast



800-873-7225

www.sackups.com



Sitting still doesn't have to be uncomfortable — spend a little more on a good cushion and you'll appreciate the investment.

cushion you might spend hours sitting on in the woods. When you simply squeeze them for a moment or two, they all feel good. The best way to select a hunting cushion is to sit it on a hard surface, such as a concrete floor, and sit on it for a period of time. Most of us do not have that much time when shopping and do not want to be seen sitting on the floor of a retail store. That being the case, use the knee test. Place the cushion on a hard floor and kneel down on one knee and place all your weight on it. You should not be able to feel the floor through the cushion.

Check to see if the cushion has a guarantee with a return policy in the event that you are not satisfied within a short period after purchasing.

A quality cushion will not be cheap. A full day of comfort requires expensive materials, but like most things in life, you get what you pay for.

Hours of comfort in the woods can help you be a better hunter. Sitting still and being alert doesn't have to be torture. Amortized over a lifespan of several years, a quality hunting cushion can be one of the wisest hunting investments you can make.

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