

Bullet Drop Compensators

At the turn of the century, BDC dials and reticles were often set for just a few cartridges, like 5.56 (223) 55 grain and 62 grain, or 7.62 (308) 168 grain, and were very suspect in terms of accuracy. Atmospheric conditions are varied, but the BDC dials stayed the same regardless of cartridge velocity, projectile BC (ballistic coefficient), temperature, barrel length, or elevation. They were ballpark, not precise, except in rare cases.

Enter the Nikon "Spot On Technology" website. This appeared in the mid-2000s, and was my favorite new product at the Vegas Shot Show that year. It is simply amazing. Just enter in any cartridge's ballistic information, whether factory or handload, and get the trajectory for that cartridge with any type of atmospheric information. It is used to find the distances that the Nikon BDC reticle circles line up with at any magnification. It will also work with any crosshair scope from any company. You can even print it out for reference or size it to be taped to your stock or scope for quick reference in the field.

Since "Spot On", many other companies have developed their own programs that have similar attributes. Some are very good, some are a bit heady and complicated. These programs are the most valuable development in riflescope use in decades, and have the most to do with hunters' ability or desire to take longer shots than ever before possible. Whether you move a turret to adjust for distance, or use the stadia lines or circles in your reticle, these are here to stay, and a lot of the guessing game is completely gone. Used with skill and a laser rangefinder, these reticles and websites combine to make you feel quite empowered. They presume the shooter is capable of making ethical shots in the field, and the only way to ensure this is to burn powder with trigger time and good practice, not just shooting.