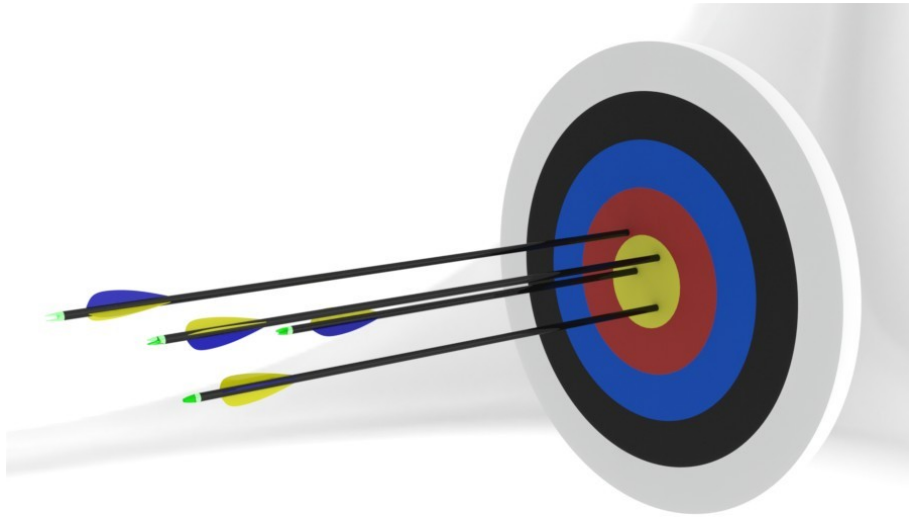


50 Tips and Tricks



for the Archer and Bowhunter

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Plastic vanes that have become wrinkled or deformed can often be straightened out by using one of a few different methods:

- Using a blow dryer or hot air gun, carefully move the airstream up and down the length of the vane until the shape is restored
- Dip the fletchings in hot water and leave them until they straighten. If they do not straighten, try increasing the temperature of the water until they do.
- A butane lighter can be used instead of a blow dryer when in the field. Run the flame up and down the length of the vane without letting the flame touch the plastic. Be careful not to burn the vane!

To keep points and broadheads from rattling loose from repeated shooting and vibration, coat the threads with a small amount of string wax (just enough to cover the threads) and screw into the arrows tightly.

Practice shooting in positions that will be used in the field. Sitting, kneeling, on inclines, from different heights and more. If you will be hunting in hilly or mountainous terrain, practice uphill and downhill shots to understand how your bow will perform during these shots.

When adding or removing twists to bow strings and cables, pull the entire string/cable out before twisting. This will ensure that the twists run the entire length of the string and require less "shooting in" to settle down to a permanent position.

A great way to install pinnock bushings or uni-bushings is to use plastic grocery bags. Place the bag loosely over the end of the arrow shaft and push the bushing along with the bag into the shaft (layer the bag for a tighter fit.) Carefully tear the bag away from the bushing; if material remains it can be removed by burning it with a butane lighter and/or running a razor or sharp knife along the edge of the bushing.

Before shooting broadheads for the first time after installation, use a simple fixture to spin the arrows and note the movement of the broadhead tip. If the tip wobbles, this can often be fixed by rotating the insert in the shaft. Any broadhead/shaft combinations that do not spin true should not be used (save the arrow for field points only) or the arrow may experience erratic and unpredictable flight.

Line the arrow shelf with moleskin or similar to help quiet the noise caused from arrows coming off of the rest or drop away rest prongs slapping the shelf.

When shooting extreme or long uphill and downhill shots always aim lower. Gravity affects arrow flight only along the horizontal distance the arrow travels, not the total distance.

Use a bow sight with a level to make sure that the bow is always held vertical. This is especially important when shooting on uneven ground and the tendency is to cant the bow. Even a few degrees of cant can throw an arrow off by several inches.

When shooting on uneven ground, begin the draw sequence by leaning into the uphill side. This will help to keep the bow vertical through the draw and aiming sequence. Use the sight level to make sure the bow is held level.

When measuring arrow length, measure from the throat of the nock (the part of the nock that touches the string) to the tip of the shaft. Make certain to measure using the type of nock you intend to install into the newly cut shafts. Various nock styles can vary by over 1/4".

When installing a D-loop, coat the cord with a small amount of bowstring wax before installation. This will help the loop tighten down and seat more easily.

If a particular arrow is consistently off target, try rotating the nock in thirty degree increments and shooting again. Keep doing this to see if a certain nock position will get the arrow to group with the others. Once the nock is in the proper position, make a mark that straddles the nock and the shaft in case the nock is accidentally rotated out of position. This is an excellent way to fine tune full dozens of arrows to each other and improve overall accuracy.

For the best accuracy, especially with broadheads, square the ends of the arrow shaft (both point and nock end) as well as the inserts. This can be done using a commercial shaft squaring device, lathe or a simple block, with a hole the size of the shaft drilled in it, set on top of sandpaper. Having squared components will ensure that all parts of the arrow are inline with each other; this will help create more consistent flight, especially with broadheads.

To gauge if a hunting bow is easy enough to draw, try these two simple tests. Face 180 degrees away from the target, twist around to face the target and draw the bow with the sight on target (if you can't twist a full 180 degrees, try the most that you can). The second method is to sit on the ground with legs extended, put the sight on target and draw back. If this can't be done while being able to shooting accurately, lower the poundage.

Teach a kid to shoot! Show them how to be safe, how to shoot with proper form and what the different equipment options are. There is nothing better for the future of the sport than today's youth.

When choosing different accessories, try as many variations as possible before purchasing. Ask friends, fellow club members or people at the range if you can try their equipment or spend time with a quality pro shop.

When sighting in it can be very helpful to begin shooting at a vertical stripe; some kind of contrasting tape and background works well. This will force concentration on lining up horizontally and getting the windage set properly. Next use a horizontal stripe to line up each pin vertically at all the necessary yardages.

To do bare-shaft tuning properly, the un-fletched arrows must have the same dynamic spine as the fletched arrows. Weigh the fletched arrows then wrap enough tape around the end of the shaft of the un-fletched arrows to meet the same weight.

A cheap and easy arrow lubricant is bar soap. Keep a small piece in a quiver pocket and rub the soap on the front 6-8" of the arrow after every few shots.

One way to automatically lube arrows kept in a side quiver is to finely shave soap into the quiver. As the arrows are inserted and removed, they will pulverize the soap flakes and coat the arrow tips with a fine, lubricating powder.

Place a small strip of reflector tape around the arrow shaft just above the nock to make an effective way to find arrows with a flashlight in the dark. The tape can often be found in the automotive section of Walmart or at auto parts stores.

Dental floss makes an excellent repair tool for serving issues in the field. Keep the floss samples given at dental checkups for a small and convenient way to keep some handy in a backpack or side quiver.

“Zingers” (self-contained, retractable cords) are an excellent way to carry accessories in the field. Calls, range finders and flashlights are just a few things that can be mounted with them. A good selection can usually be found in any good fly fishing department or shop.

Many bows have timing marks on the cam to help visualize where the cams are rotated in relation to the rest of the bow. Make note of these marks and occasionally check them to ensure that the cams stay in time and that your strings/cables have not stretched. If the manufacturer does not have marks on the cams, make some using a small strip of tape, permanent marker or white-out.

Always nock an arrow and point in a safe direction before pulling a bow back! Even if just checking for draw length, peep height or anything else. A single dry fire can be very costly to repair.

Aim small, miss small. Interpretation: aiming at a very small object is likely to result in smaller misses than aiming at a very large object. IE aim at a specific hair/blotch/markings on an animal rather than the entire body.

Before applying bow string wax, wrap a piece of dental floss or serving string once around the string and move it up and down to remove old, excess wax and debris.

After applying string wax, work the wax into the string:

- Gently use a blow dryer to heat the wax and work it in with your fingers
- Wrap a piece of peep tubing once around the string or use a piece of leather pinched between fingers and rub it up and down to melt and work the wax in

Adding a small drop of glue to the front and back of a fletching can greatly increase the ability of the fletching to stick better to the shaft, especially when experiencing a pass-through or arrow collision.

The e-clips that hold the bow axles in place can often be a source of irritating vibration. To quiet the noise, pack string wax in between the clips and the limbs.

Removing broken nocks from arrow shafts can be done a couple of ways if the nock can't be grabbed and pulled out:

- Use a dry wall screw to screw into the nock and pull it out. If the nock portion is solid, drill a small hole first.
- Using pliers to hold a small finish nail, heat the nail with a butane lighter or torch and insert it into the nock, melting the plastic. Once the nock cools and solidifies, pull the nail and nock out.

If using a peep with tubing, check the tubing often for cracks or other damage. It's no fun to get smacked in the face with broken tubing! Always carry extra tubing for quick repairs.

When blind or stand hunting, remove all food items from noisy packaging before heading to the stand. If necessary, store the items in plastic baggies that make much less noise.

Never, ever use a treestand without a safety harness.

Before sharpening broadheads, use a permanent marker to coat the blade edge. This will make it easy to see if the blade is being sharpened evenly and properly.

When practicing, try to practice 10 or 20 yards farther than your longest shot will be, whether it is for hunting, 3D or spots. Practicing at distances farther than you will be shooting is the best way to make the shorter shots seem easier.

Many mosquito repellents can be very damaging to the finish on a bow. After applying mosquito repellent, wash of any part of your hands that might come in contact with the bow.

Leaving a bow in a vehicle on a sunny and/or hot day can do irreparable damage to a bow, even causing string a limb failures. Always remove a bow from a vehicle that may get excessively hot. If the bow must remain in the vehicle, crack the windows to help reduce the heat build up.

Place a lightweight string or string with a small feather on the end of your stabilizer. This will help detect wind and wind direction when shooting outdoors.

A couple of ways to detect fletching contact with the rest/bow:

- Spray foot powder on the fletchings and the riser cutout and rest. After the shot look carefully for any marks in the foot powder that indicate fletching contact.
- Put bright lipstick on the edges of the fletchings. If they are coming in contact with any part of the bow the lipstick will leave a streak that is easily seen.

Lighted nocks can be a great tuning tool. Shoot with lighted nocks in the dark and observe the arrow path. This can be done a few ways:

- Watch the arrow yourself
- Have a friend stand behind you and watch the arrow
- Use a camera to take a time lapse shot of the entire arrow flight (Best!)

Using a lighted nock makes observing the arrow flight much easier. A good time lapse shot of the arrow streaking towards the target is one of the best ways to see exactly how an arrow is flying.

When shooting carbon arrows, periodically flex them and listen carefully for any creaking, popping or other noises that may indicate damage to the arrow. After a shot where two arrows end up touching or the arrow collides with anything, inspect the arrow carefully along with the flex test. The little time it takes to flex and inspect can prevent an exploding arrow incident that can cause serious bodily damage.

Spinning an arrow can help determine if there are any imbalances or straightness issues. Three ways to do this:

- Place the point down in the palm and fletchings to the sky, using your thumb and a finger (middle finger generally works best) quickly spin the arrow and feel for wobbles
- Put the fingernails of your thumb and middle finger together to form a "V", rest the balance point of the arrow in the "V" and use the fingers on the other hand to give the arrow a hard spin
- Make the same "V" as in the previous method, but place the "V" a couple of inches down from the fletchings. Place the point of the arrow in the opposite hand's palm and blow on the fletchings to spin the arrow. This method is especially good to observe any inconsistencies in the rotation of the nock.

If your cat whiskers or other silencers are moving on the string/cables, tie a small amount of serving above the silencers to keep them from creeping.

Screws on bows are subject to harsh vibrations and can often come loose. A little bit of bowstring wax on the threads can help keep them in place. For particularly troublesome screws, a small dot of threadlocker will keep them in place. If using Loctite brand threadlocker, purple (weak) or blue (medium) threadlockers can be used where screws may have to be removed at a later date. Red threadlocker is extremely strong and should only be used in places where screws are installed permanently.

To track arrow performance and find any troublesome arrows, number all your arrows. Use a permanent marker (silver markers work great on carbon arrow shafts) to mark either the shaft of the arrows near the nock or write directly on one of the vanes. When shooting a new batch of arrows, record each arrow's impact site on the target and look for any abnormal patterns of impact sites.

If using a sight with a round housing, pick a peep sight that at full draw just barely matches the outside of the sight housing. This will make centering the sight in the peep quick and easy. If the exact size of peep is not available, buy the next size down and drill it out (in very small steps!) until it is the right size.

Once your bow is setup properly, record all of the pertinent specs somewhere easy to remember and readily available.

- Brace height
- ATA
- Nock set height
- Nock set to peep distance
- Top and bottom tiller
- Tune string/cable lengths
- Rest height with respect to the riser
- Center of rest distance from riser
- Anything else you can think of!

Having these measurements on hand can drastically reduce setup time when any changes are made to the bow.

Dried seed pods from milkweed plants are excellent wind indicators in the field. Gather a couple of pods when they are available and keep them in a small Ziplock bag. Tossing a single seed into the breeze can result in a very long flight path that will give a good picture of how the wind is blowing from more than your immediate area. Other lightweight, flying seeds may also be used.