

Archery 101



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Archery 101

Introduction

This first course will introduce the basics of shooting a bow (recurve or long bow). The following are the topics to be covered in this 8-week program:

1. **Shooting Safety**
 - a. Archery Range Rules
 - b. Range Master Commands
2. **Shooting Form**
 - a. Eleven Steps to Consistent Archery (Instinctive)
3. **Factors affecting Bow Selection**
 - a. Types of Bows
 - b. Bow Specifications
4. Addendum
 - a. Using the Shooter's Log-book

1. Shooting Safety

Before we begin shooting there are several safety practices that you need to know. Archery is a sport in which the tools can be dangerous if used incorrectly. Knowing the range layout and verbal commands will help to keep everyone on the range safe. There should always be a designated shooter or non-shooter acting as a **Range-Master**. The safety protocol must be strictly followed so that a fun and safe shoot takes place.

1.1. Archery Range Rules

In archery there are standard rules. It is important to make new archers aware of the risks involved in archery and how to decrease the likelihood of an accident. The following is the list of rules.

- **Always be sure that the path to the target and beyond is clear.**
- **Never point a drawn arrow at anything you do not intend to shoot.**
- **Always be certain that the target is clearly visible, safe to shoot and appropriate.**
- **Always be aware of the danger areas at the ends of the arrow and the tips of the limbs.**
- **Place an arrow on the string only when you are told it is safe to shoot.**
- **Never fool around with your archery tackle. Respect it.**
- **Never use archery equipment while your mental ability is impaired by fatigue, distractions, or the influence of any drug.**

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- Always exercise caution when retrieving arrows or removing them from a target. Do not stand behind anyone removing arrows from the target.
- Always be sure that all archery tackle is in perfect working condition and free from damage before it is used.
- Always abide by the strictest codes of behavior and ethics applied to the archery sport in which you are participating. This includes specific range rules.

The FITA (Fédération Internationale de Tir à l'Arc) is the governing body for most target archery throughout the world and dictates specific range rules for archery protocols.

1.2. Range Master Commands

To get started, the designated **Range-Master** will use the following verbal command for each end.

- **“Shooters to the line”**
 - Shooters move from the waiting area to the shooting line with their bow and arrows
- **“Clear to shoot”**
 - Shooters can nock arrows and shoot a specified number of arrows at the targets, then move back from the shooting line and hang up their bows.
- **“Clear to retrieve”**
 - The Range-Master, on determining all shooters are finished shooting announces, “clear to retrieve” and then the shooters are free to move to the targets, score their arrows, retrieve their arrows*, and return to the waiting area in preparation of the next end.

**After the arrows have been scored, it is best that only one person pulls the arrows at each target. Never stand behind a person pulling arrows*

2. Shooting Form

Archery is easy; just do exactly the same thing each time

No matter what kind of bow you are shooting, the basic shooting form is the same. This method can be used with self-bows, compound bows, long bows, or recurve bows. The reason a standard method was developed is because the key to consistent accuracy is consistent proper form. By learning and using this method every time you shoot, there will be a greater likelihood that your shooting will improve over time and will become more consistent. **The Eleven Steps to Consistent Archery** method starts the minute you move to the shooting line and ends after the arrow hits the target.

2.1. **Eleven Steps to Consistent Archery (Instinctive)**

1. **Stance & Posture**

- Place one foot on each side of the shooting line.
- Find a comfortable balance stance with feet shoulder width apart, knees unlocked. Align the toes so that the tips of the toes are in a line towards the target. (square stance)
- Stand straight, keeping ribs and chest down, and bottom tucked under.
- Keep shoulders down and loose.

2. **Nock Arrow**

- Place arrow on arrow rest, holding arrow close to nock.
- Keep index fletching pointing away from the bow.
- Snap nock of arrow onto bowstring under nock locator.

3. **Set Hook**

- Set first groove of first three fingers around the bowstring with one finger above the nock and two below creating a hook. (Mediterranean style). The string will sit in the joints of the three fingers.
- Keep back of drawing hand flat and relaxed.

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- The thumb and pinky should be tucked away.

4. **Set Bow-Hand Grip**

- Position the bowhand on the bow grip by making a Y with the fingers and thumb.
- The knuckles of the fingers should be positioned a 45-degree angle from the bow and the thumb point towards the target without choking the bow.

5. **Pre- draw the Bow**

- Raise the bow arm and string hand together towards the target, while keeping shoulder down and aligning chest perpendicular to target.
- Drawing arm should be near level of nose.
- Bow arm should be rotated so it is straight up and down.
- Focus on the centre of the target.

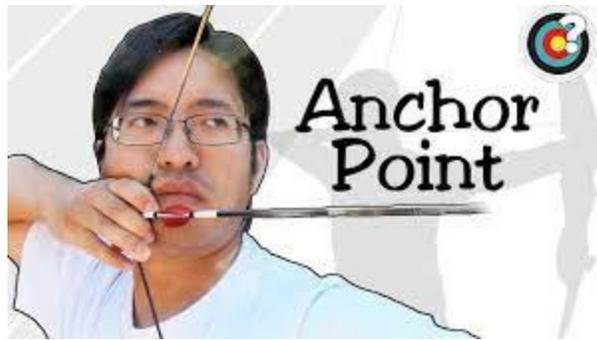
6. **Draw**

- Draw the string back in a straight line by extending the bow (step 5) to the side of the face anchor point.
- Set drawing arm shoulder back and down until elbow is directly behind or a bit higher than arrow.
- Keep your focus on the target.

7. **Anchor**

- Draw string to side of face placing tip of first finger on corner of mouth.
- Keep hand snug against face folding thumb down and little finger towards palm.
- Keep focused on the centre of the target

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8. Aim

- Concentrate on where you want the arrow to go.
- **Keep both eyes open.**

9. Release

- Release all tension in fingers and drawing hand, all at once, while continuing to draw bowstring back without stopping.
- Continue holding the bow arm towards target.
- Continue focusing on target.

10. Follow Through

- The drawing hand should continue back beside neck with fingers relaxed and ending up under the ear.
- Keep bow arm up.
- Maintain follow through until arrow hits the target.

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Follow-through posture

11. **Relax & Evaluate**

- Relax after each shot.
- Evaluate the feeling of each shot to determine if you accomplished the goal you were trying to achieve.

3. Factors Affecting Bow Selection

There are many diverse types and designs of bows. This guide will help when visiting an archery shop to buy your first bow. Take your time and if possible, try out the bow if there is an archery range at the shop.

3.1. Types of Bows

3.1.1. Long Bow

A long bow is a straight bow (no curvature in the limbs), This type of bow can be made of one piece of material or composite materials including types of wood or synthetics.



3.1.2. Recurve

This bow has a reverse curve in the limbs. This reverse curve gives the bow more strength while keeping the bow shorter than a long bow of the same poundage.



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3.1.3. Self Bow

Self bow is a bow made with one type of material, usually wood. Ash and maple are common types. Long and recurve bows can be classed as a self bow if made of one material, usually wood.

3.1.4. Compound

This is a relatively new type of bow. Using offset cams this bow will “let off” as the string is pulled to the anchor point and this will allow the archer to hold at anchor for a longer time to facilitate a better aim.



3.2. Bow Specifications

3.2.1. Size

Size pertains to the length of the bow. As a rule, the longer the bow the more accurate the bow will be. The following is a chart used by some that relates the persons height vs bow size.

Archer's Height	Bow Size (inches)
Up to 5'6"	64
Up to 5'10"	66
Up to 6'2"	68
Over 6'2"	70

Perhaps a better measure would be based on the person's draw length. Measuring a person's draw length is relatively simple. Stretch the arms out to the sides and measure from tips of the fingers. Draw length = arm span/2.5.

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The bow length is twice the draw length. Note that modern recurve hunting bows are often manufactured shorter than those listed in the chart above for ease of maneuvering in the bush.

3.3. Weight (Poundage)

For youth, a common guideline would be the poundage be equal to the youth's age. Of course, this is a very general guideline. The biggest single mistake made by new archers is to purchase a bow too heavy for them. Do not over-bow yourself.

The following chart is a basic guideline for beginner archers

Type of Person/Build	Weight (lbs)	Weight (kgs)	Recurve Suggested Draw Weight (lbs)
Small/Slight Child	70-100	31-45	10-15
Large/Strong Child	100-130	45-59	15-25
Small/Slight Woman	100-130	45-59	25-35
Average Woman	130-160	59-73	25-35
Large/Strong Woman	160+	73+	30-45
Small/Slight Man or Older Boy	120-150	54-68	30-45
Average Man	150-180	68-82	40-55
Large/Strong Man	180+	82+	45-60

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Addendum

Using the Archer's Logbook

Practice makes perfect is an old saying that has a lot of truth. However, there is a lot of niggling details to the practice that can be overwhelming. Stance, posture, hold to hold the bow, etc. are the details that need to be practiced, **but not at the same time** in the beginning.

Focus on the stance. Try to assume the same foot position at the beginning of each shoot. After several rounds (ends) move on to focus on the posture. The after a more rounds, add in the next focus.

To track the progress, the Archer's Logbook is used to keep track of your progress. After each day, enter the number of shots as shown below. Use tic marks to count the number of rounds then multiply the number of tics by the number of arrows for the number of shots. Then add this number to the previous total for the Running Totals.

Date	# of Shots	Running Totals	Comments
Jan 19	60	2061	
Jan 20	96	2157	
Jan 21	60	2217	
Jan 22	84	2291	
Jan 24	84	2375	
Jan 25	96	2471	