

## WHY ARROW SPEED IS STILL IMPORTANT

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Most accomplished bowhunters have come to realize that the hardest part of any shot is getting the distance right. Anything you can do to improve your unknown distance accuracy is worth the time and expense. In addition, if you're hunting deer that are prone to "jump the string", extra arrow speed will reduce the affects of this phenomena. Again, it may not make a huge difference, but when it comes right down to it; bowhunting, like football, is a game of inches.

One of my hunting buddies is now a firm believer in shooting the fastest possible arrow. Several years ago he had an opportunity to take a once-in-a-lifetime trophy. In the excitement he misjudged the distance by only five yards. He thought it was 20 when it was actually 25 yards. The looping arrow cut brisket hair on its way past! He confesses that the bow and arrow combination he was shooting at the time was slow. As a result of that miss he upgraded to an UltraLite aluminum shaft and an overdraw. His arrow speed went from 220 to 260 feet per second.

Then last season the same friend had another encounter with a once-in-a-lifetime trophy (twice-in-a-lifetime?) but again he misjudged the distance by a mere five yards. (He even had a rangefinder, but the buck surprised him from a direction he didn't expect and hadn't pre-ranged.) My friend thought the shot was 25 yards, but it was actually 30. The arrow flew just under the brute's chest. Again, my friend's reaction was to upgrade. This season he's shooting ACC arrows from a low brace height, 250 fps AMO rated bow. Now he shoots close to 290 fps. After this year is finally on record it will be interesting to see what he's shooting. He's learned some hard lessons and now he's squeezing out all the speed he can.

If you haven't already pushed arrow speed to the limit, there are simple things you can do to increase it. First, you can purchase a bow with an aggressive cam system and a low brace height. These bows are debatably less forgiving of mistakes in form than other styles, and because they store more energy they are also harder to draw for the same maximum draw weight. Many bowhunters who release the string with their fingers find that the explosive high energy release of a cam bow is hard to control, therefore, the most aggressive bows are recommended only for release aid and advanced finger shooters. But despite their downside, these bows are fast, and for the better shooter they represent a definite advantage.

Second, you can select lighter arrows. A broad selection of shaft sizes exist for each spine stiffness range. In aluminum shafts alone, there are many options. Thin-walled, large diameter aluminum arrows are gaining popularity, with shafts such as the 2413 quickly supplanting the old thick walled standards, such as 2117 and 2219. Carbon

arrows continue to gain acceptance due to their light weight, durability and stiffness. By simply going to a lighter arrow you can pick up considerable arrow speed without changing anything else about your present equipment.

Third, you can put an overdraw on your bow which allows you to shorten your arrows and drop down to a lighter shaft size at the same time. With the many lightweight arrow options available, overdraws aren't as necessary to achieve speed as they once were. Release aid users can handle long overdraws (up to three inches), but finger shooters should forget about overdraws and look into lighter, full-length arrows instead.