

Are you hitting what your aiming at? It all happens in a blink of an eye.

Article Courtesy Spot Hogg

In a blink of the eye, a lot can happen. The blink of an eye can make the difference between hitting what you are aiming at, and just being close.

We have found, if you *don't* blink your eye at the same instant the arrow is released, then it's possible to watch your complete shot execution.

Blinking your eyes at the moment the arrow is delivered has never (to our knowledge) been discussed or touched upon before. But, when we discovered that we were blinking, and made an effort to stop (it wasn't easy), our shooting improved. Then we discovered that everyone we worked with shot better if they were able to stop blinking during the shot execution. So, we felt it was time to talk about it.

Blinking is a natural thing to do and hard to notice because everything happens so fast. It seems to be below the threshold of awareness. There are a lot of things going on, during the shot, that seem to be more important.

In fact, there is a good chance even now, you may not be able to tell if you are blinking. Many will swear they **do not** blink even when they do. They're not lying, they're just not doing what they think they are doing. *Are you doing what you think you are doing?*

This single blink comes at the most critical moment. It has the effect of shooting with a blindfold. We go to all the trouble to draw back the bow, get everything all lined up and then we close our eyes as the arrow is released.

This may be why practicing up close at a blank bale with our eyes closed helps so many people shoot better. It is the only time that they practice what they are really doing. That is, shooting with their eyes closed.

Closing your eyes is indeed the best and easiest way to just let the shot happen. Although, letting the shot be a surprise works pretty good as well. But, if the shot really is a surprise, the natural reaction is to blink. There is a very fast reaction time, when it comes to protecting the eyes from damage. Fast enough, that we don't see all of what is happening when the bow "explodes" during arrow delivery. We're too busy protecting our eyes.

So far, we have found a few ways to determine if the eyes are blinking. The first one, is to find out if you have trouble shooting with your eyes purposely held wide open. The ease with which you are able to do this will tell you if you have a problem. If you still

have to blink even though you are trying to hold your eyes ridiculously wide open, then you are indeed shooting with your eyes closed.

Another way is to have a friend watch you.

The third way to find out, is to take note of the bow movement that occurs when the shot is executed. If you have a strobe light effect, where the bow jumps from a "before the arrow is gone" position, to the "it's a done deal" position and you didn't see the bow make the movement. Then you blinked.

The eye, brain, and all the connected wiring don't run on a frames per second type basis, but sees and records on a continuous basis. The bow movement is not so fast that your eye can't pick it up and your brain record it. Watch someone else shoot and you can see their bow move. The reason you don't see your bow move is your eyes were closed when it happened. In the blink of an eye a lot can happen.

A few problems that we found happened in the blink of an eye are; the sight moved out of position, the bow torqued from different hand pressure, the bow didn't always move the same, and the bow starts to drop before the shot is done. There was an amazing amount of consistency with all of the things that could and did happen in the blink of an eye. For a lot of shooters that consistency is "good enough". Especially, when you find how hard it is to not blink. It is a lot easier not worry about it and settle for "good enough".

For some, "good enough" comes only when the arrow hits dead-center-perfect. Not only does the arrow have to hit exactly where we intend, but we have to feel that it was our skill that put it there, not luck. That is our "good enough".

Many hours of practice, a lot of money, and a lot of frustration are spent in pursuit of "good enough". Generally, a shooter seems to reach a certain level of skill and can't get any further. It is often referred to as reaching a "plateau". Getting from one "plateau" to the next sometimes seems impossible and is seldom easy.

To stop blinking during that nano-second of shot execution is not easy. But if you can see what is really going on, you might be able to see the path to the next "plateau". You can't fix something that you don't know is happening.