

Bowhunting Tips

Secure bow string release

To keep from losing your bow string release, tie it to your hunting clothing. You can use a leather boot string or plastic "coiled chain" with a snap. It looks like a phone cord with a snap on the end and only costs a couple of bucks. Tie your release to one end and snap the other end to your belt loop. The "coiled chain" works best.

Set your shooting distance

To keep from wounding game know your shooting limits. Set your personal shooting maximum. It will probably be between 30 and 40 yards. Don't shoot beyond your limit.

Pace off target practice distance

Practice pacing off when you are out target practicing during the summer. While standing at your target, take your arrows and throw them in various places around you. Pace off the distance to each arrow and practice shooting from that spot. Try far quartering shots and close broadside shots and vice versa. If you can be accurate from these areas on the first few shots of practicing, you will be effective during the season. But the biggest thing is to know your yardage and how far your target is at all times. That's where pacing off on every shot will come in handy.

Arrow Penetration

When you sight-in your bow during the off season, be sure to check the penetration depth of your arrows at your farthest shooting distance. If you are not getting adequate penetration at this distance, you need to keep moving closer to your target until you get good penetration. Set this distance as your maximum shooting range. Poor penetration will just wound game.

The key to success

When you are target practicing with your bow practice shooting from different angles. Then try shooting from different distances by moving farther back and then closer to your target. Now try shooting from different heights, similar to shooting from a tree stand. Now that you can hit your target from real hunting like situations, practice being a stealth hunter, it is a major key to your success.

Packing your broadheads

It is critical to have a safe and quiet place to pack your broadheads when you are hunting big game. Before you travel wrap each blade of your broadhead in scotch tape and then put the broadhead in a 35 mm film canister along with some cotton balls to keep them silent.

Watch those squeaks

Since I started bow hunting, I have learned some hard lessons. Deer won't stick around if they hear any unnatural noises. Test your bow to make sure that it is silent as you pull it to full draw. If you have a squeaky wheel, give it a small amount of oil. Also test your stand for squeaks. While sitting in your stand, listen for squeaks as you shift your weight and twist from side to side. Also try

putting felt on your arrow rest. When you draw your bow, the arrow will slide smoothly and silently across the felt.

Enjoying good company

If you are hunting with a close and safe friend try to set up where you can see each other. My dad and I do this and we have been able to see each other take some nice deer. This makes the whole hunting experience more exciting by seeing your close friend in action. This also works equally well in rifle season.

Know the wind direction

Tie a piece of sewing thread to the end of your stabilizer, so that it hangs down about five or six inches. Just watch the string and you will constantly know the slightest breeze direction.

Sight in for your stand

Many people over look the fact that when you're in your stand, you're shooting downwards. You will need to sight in your bow for both flat shooting and stand shooting. You might want to use two different sights.

Sharpening your broadheads

I have learned that sharpening your broadheads is easier if you use an actual knife sharpener. The sharpeners that I'm talking about are the ones that are usually blue and they have two sharpeners that cross at the top. They also have a handle and a finger guard. These sharpeners only cost about \$5.00.

Pull back before

When you are bow hunting you always want to pull your bow back at least 30-45 seconds before the deer gets to you. Don't pull back more than you can hold, if you do your arms will get tired and you will be shaky when its time to shoot the deer. Try to pull back when the deer is looking away from you or when its head is behind a tree or brush. Always make sure your arrows are straight. If they are not, they will misfire. When you get your sights sighted in, you might want to tighten them with pliers. If you hand tighten your sights they can easily get loose and move, if they bump up against something.

Decrease your bow weight /protect your shafts

Snap on quivers leave your knobs exposed and your shafts unprotected. Have you ever had dirt get into a knock or had an arrow twang when it hung up in the brush? Try using a plastic tube cut to arrow length then cover tube with camo duct tape. In one end place a piece of Styrofoam to protect the broad heads. Just push the arrows into the Styrofoam and it will keep them protected and secure. Use a PVC pipe cap for other end. A small wire fishing leader can be used to secure the cap so it won't get lost. Attach a strap and you can carry your new quiver over your shoulder, just like the Indians used to do.

Shooting from a tree stand

If you shoot from a climbing tree stand and you shoot with your quiver attached to your bow, reverse your quiver with the vanes up instead of being down. When attached in the traditional way, vanes down, in most cases the vanes extend beyond the length of the bow and will rub or hang up on the top part of a climbing stand particularly on a short, in close shot. Reversing your quiver can eliminate this problem.

Bow hunting strap-on seat

When bow hunting from a climbing stand it is often difficult to shoot your bow on close shots or shots to the rear without the bottom limb of your bow being inside of the top part of your climbing stand. The result will be the bottom bow limb banging against the top portion of the stand upon firing, resulting in a missed shot or worse the bow being jerked out of your hand. I experienced this problem for years and finally came up with a workable solution this past season. Take a small strap-on seat up with you in a backpack. Once at the height you plan to hunt, lower the top portion of your climbing stand until it almost touches the lower portion you stand on. Attach the strap-on seat (there are several on the market) to a comfortable sitting position. Then when drawing and shooting the problem will be eliminated. It's as though you are shooting from a hanging stand. As always, be sure to wear a safety belt regardless of the type deer stand you hunt from.

Stump shooting

I whole-heartedly believe in stump shooting as being one of the best methods of shooting practice. Roam around the woods with judo points or rubber blunts and shoot anything that could be a potential target (rotten stumps, clumps of dirt, leaves). Pay close attention to where you hit each time. This will set your instincts right on target for knowing your distances. One of the biggest problems with people hitting too low or too high on a deer is because they lack the judgement of distance. Stump shooting is a must!

Silence your bow string

Silence your bow string with "limb saver" string leech. The string leech delivers maximum noise reduction and up to 65% reduction in string resonance with only 1-2 feet per second speed loss, in most cases. The string leech will not take all the sound away, but it will dampen most of the sound when you release your arrow.

Secure your deer call

If your deer call doesn't have a lanyard on it, you can make one from a leather boot lace. Put the lanyard or lace around your neck and it will be there when you need it.

Know your partner's call

If you hunt with a partner, know the sound of his calls. If you know the sound of your partner's call you won't waste your time sneaking up on your partner.

Don't call too often

When you're hunting during the rut and all the bucks are going wild, don't use your deer call too often. Do your calling and then wait about 15 minutes before you call again. If you call too often, it will sound unnatural and the deer could run the other way.

Organize your calling

If hunting with a partner, simulate a group of deer by calling back and forth to each other. This may encourage a buck to walk in and see what is going on.

Stopping a deer

Here is a trick I use and have great success with. If you have a hard time tracking a moving deer that is in range, try blowing a snort call. I have seen that calling will most often stop a deer dead in its tracks. The animal will be on the highest alert so be prepared for a quick shot. This trick is most effective when your viewing area is more open.

Stop that wounded deer

After the shot has been taken (bow or gun) give one or two blows on your grunt tube. Sometimes this will stop or at least slow him down, minimizing tracking distance. Sometimes with small (subordinate, yearling) bucks they will spook even more. No deer hunter should be without a grunt tube, they work if used properly.

Stop a running deer

If a whitetail deer is running away and it hasn't yet winded you, you can give a short whistle and about half the time the deer will stop and look around to see where the whistle came from. This will give you time for a quick shot, before it runs away for good.

Give it a whistle

When you have that buck coming to you in your shooting lane, and he has his head down grazing. Give a little whistle and the majority of the time this will stop the deer and he'll raise his head to see what's going on. This will allow you time for that perfect shot.

Try dove decoys

Next time you are watching your favorite area from your stand, place 3-4 dove decoys on the ground. Doves are very skittish and will take flight at the first sign of danger. Any animal that comes along and spots the doves will think all is fine. Naturally, doves must be native to your area for this to work. If they are, give it a try.

Bring your whole bag of tricks

Always carry more than one call. If the grunt call isn't working try using a softer or deeper tone than you have been using or switch to a fawn bleat. It also doesn't hurt to have the rattling antlers ready. No one sound will attract all deer. So find a call that the buck you're after will respond to. Good luck and remember above all else to be safe.

Call a big buck

If you want to call a big buck, try cupping your hands around your mouth and make a loud burping type sound. You're going to have to call loud enough for the deer to hear you. This has worked for me before, so if you try and get good enough it will work for you to.

Use a turkey call

When walking to your stand in a noisy, leafy area use a turkey call. Use the turkey call often as you walk. This will make the deer think your a gobbler and not a hunter.

Call while walking

While walking to your hunting area during hunting season, try using the Tending Grunts, this call works best while you're on the ground and moving through the leaves. The Tending Grunt is used when a buck chases a doe as the rut approaches, he will make 7-15 soft grunts in rapid succession, while trailing her. It's a buck's way of asking her to stop so he can breed with her. While doing this call I've had many deer run up on me unexpectedly, so keep your ears and eyes open!