

BASIC ARROW CRESTING

Cresting arrows is what traditional arrow builders have practiced for centuries. As long as there have been bows and arrows, somebody somewhere has personalized their arrow shafts with their individual pattern. This pattern identified the owner and sometimes their lineage. This rich tradition lives on today!

Preparation - For best results, we suggest that you dip your arrow shafts in white Fletch-Lac (see arrow dipping information) prior to cresting. You will need to decide on the colors that you want to use in your crest. A good rule of thumb is to keep it simple. 1 or 2 main colors, with a 3rd pin stripe (usually a metallic or black).

Crown Dip. Once the shafts are cleaned they are ready for what is known as a crown dip. Dipping arrows with a white basecoat of lacquer serves several purposes. Most important, the crown dip provides a surface that readily accepts the adhesives used to attach plastic vanes and nocks. A bond stronger than the plastic itself is achieved when vanes are glued to arrow shafts dipped in a quality lacquer such as Bohning's Fletch-Lac.

Dipping the arrows also provides a base coat that allows other colors used during the cresting process to cover in a bold and uniform manner. A white basecoat is a must if fluorescent colors are used.

Dipping also makes arrows more visible in flight, aiding the hunter who strives to see the arrow impact the quarry even in low light.

A crown dip can be white or any color of the rainbow. White should be used as a base color. Each arrow is dipped into a container filled with 8-10 inches of Fletch-Lac. Aluminum arrows with nock tapers allow the paint to drip off the taper, providing a clean and uniform dipped surface.

When removing the arrow from the dip tank, the excess paint should run off for about 15 seconds. If the paint is too thin let the open container set in a dust-free environment until the solvents have a chance to evaporate. Normally two dips spaced approximately one minute apart are required to cover the shaft effectively.

Once the arrows have been dipped twice, they should be hung up to dry for approximately 24 hours before cresting or fletching the shafts.

Those hunters who wish to dip arrows featuring a uni-bushing nock such as those used on Easton's XX78 Super Slam must insert a short length of 1/4-inch dowel rod into each nock bushing before dipping the shafts. The dowel rod prevents paint from getting into the bushing and insures that the nock will fit properly.

Make Your Template - In order to keep all your shafts the same, it is a good idea to make a template of your crest. You can do this on a plain piece of paper by drawing lines in the exact pattern you want your crest to appear on the shaft.

Adjust Support Tray - Once you have your template, place the dipped end of your arrow shaft into the crest chuck. If you have a Standard crester, place the support tray under the opposite end of your shaft, 10 - 12 inches from the crester. The Pro crester has a tray already attached.

Set Template - Tape your template directly under the shaft where you intend to create your crest. Choose your brushes, generally, a thin hairline brush and a 1/8" brush for larger bands.

Check Paint - Check your crestring paint and thin if necessary. Paint should be as thin as possible, yet still provide good coverage. You are now ready to crest.

Crestring. After cutting off the excess dried paint at the end of the nock taper, apply a drop of Fletch-Tite adhesive to the nock taper and press the nock into position. Twist the nock a couple turns to evenly spread the adhesive and set aside for a few moments to let the glue dry. Uni-bushing nocks such as those used on the XX78 Super Slam arrows are simply pressed into position with a plastic tool provided.

A crestring machine such as Bohning's Standard or Pro Crester, a selection of brushes, Fletch-Lac paints, and a paper template will be needed to complete the crestring process.

The crestring machine spins the arrow shaft and holds the arrow approximately 1-1/4 inches above the table top for uniform crestring. Press the nock into the arrow holder and turn on the crestring machine. If the arrow wobbles slightly, grab the shaft while the crestring motor continues to turn for a moment and try again. If the arrow continues to wobble chances are the shaft is bent and should be straightened or discarded.

A small paper template is the easiest way to mark crestring lines onto a rotating arrow shaft. Simply tape the template into position under the arrow and using a sharp pencil scribe light lines onto the shaft while the shaft is turning.

Crestring paints normally need to be thinned for best results. To achieve an even coverage, use two or more thin coats until the crest is uniform. When crestring several arrows it's best to crest each arrow with one color then repeat the process with additional colors as desired.

When applying paint, start in the middle of the crest and spread the paint out to the left and right of center. Rest your hand on the table top if necessary to achieve a clean and neat job.

Once the basic color bands are completed, you'll want to go back and add some pin striping using a fine brush and contrasting paint. This finishing touch further personalizes the crestring job and adds a professional look. For best results, crest lighter colors first, then proceed to the darker colors.

Dipping and crestring works best on wood and aluminum arrows. Bohning doesn't recommend dipping or crestring graphite shafts.

Cresting Specifics. Turn on the crester. The arrow shaft should rotate away from you. If the arrow shaft does not spin true, grasp the shaft momentarily while the motor continues to rotate. This should make your arrow shaft spin true. If not, move the felt cradle closer to the motor.

You should always begin your crest with the large bands and finish with the pin striping (this allows you to hide most mistakes and uneven bands). Load your brush with enough paint to do one band. You may wish to experiment on some test shafts. Start in the middle of your widest bands, pushing paint toward each edge. You should try to allow the rotation of the shaft to “pull” the paint from your brush. Allow the shaft to rotate for a few moments before moving to your next color. This will allow your first color to dry.

Pinstripes are the finishing touch. The thinner the paint is, the better the quality of pinstripes will be. Use the smallest brush to apply stripes between color bands, or in the center of bands - be creative! Be sure to keep checking the paint consistency as you crest additional arrows. When finished, clean the brushes with thinner then wash with dish soap.