

## **Archery for Beginners - Korean Style**

Unlike in the United States, there is no recreational archery in Korea. Rather than through JOAD clubs, the Koreans begin training their archers in elementary school physical education classes, around the age of ten. Many schools in Korea have designated archery coaches, similar to a physical education teacher or even a football coach in the United States. These elementary school instructors understand that the base of any good shooter is perfect bone alignment in the back and arms.

The Koreans have set out how to teach proper bone alignment by having all new archers spend three to six months doing drills. The archers begin by learning good shot mechanics with no bow in their hands. Next, they do the drills while drawing a bow and no arrow, then they add an arrow, and after many months the young archers will shoot their first arrow.

Unlike the American method of getting a bow in the hands of new archers and an arrow in the target after only a few hours (or even minutes), this "delayed gratification" process teaches perfect alignment right from the beginning. The patience the Koreans have, in the beginning, pays off as there is no need to correct major technical flaws in their archers later. Most new Korean archers will be able to shoot a 300 FITA score at 30 meters (36 arrows) the very first time they shoot it.

The lesson for the rest of us is that it is not an efficient training regimen to put a bow in the hands of shooters too quickly. Some may believe that it is acceptable to teach children to shoot at the beginning, incorrectly or not, and then correct their mistakes over time, but the truth is that this philosophy is a tremendous handicap to an archer's development.