

Bowhunting Techniques

There are several techniques used by the successful bow-hunter. Bow-hunters are broken up into two groups; Those who hunt from treestands and those who hunt from the ground. Other techniques include deer calling, rattling, stalking, driving.

Treestand Hunting: Treestands are fixtures mounted in trees to enable a hunter to hunt above the ground. A treestand hunter will tell you the advantages are to get out of the line of sight of the deer and also to give you a better vantage point of your hunting area. If you hunt from a treestand it is good practice to practice shooting your bow from a platform prior to hunting in the field. A safety harness should be used anytime that a hunter is on a treestand.

Fixed Position Treestands: A fixed position treestand is one that is physically attached to the tree. With a fixed treestand the hunter will have to climb up to the treestand. The use of steps or a ladder make this job much easier. The fixed Position treestand shown in the image is a manufactured treestand. Many fixed treestands are fabricated of wood on site by the hunter well before hunting season. The advantage of the fixed position treestand is to save the hunter from lugging a treestand into the woods each time he wants to hunt. The disadvantage is that for the most part they are not too mobile, especially if they are made of wood and fastened to a tree.

Climbing Treestands: Climbing treestands, with the aid of the hunter, actually climb the tree. There are loops on the base of the treestand that the hunter's feet slip into. The hunter hugs the tree as high as he can reach then pulls his feet up along with the treestand. The treestand's base is secured in the tree by the design of the stand. The hunter repeats the technique several times until the desired level is reached. The pros for using a climbing treestand is that the hunter is mobile and can choose any tree in the forest to hunt from depending on the time of day or weather conditions. One of the problems with climbing stands is the need to carry the stand into the hunting area for every hunt. It is also very noisy climbing with a climbing treestand. Plan on spooking every deer in the area as you climb the tree.

Safety Harness: A safety harness is a necessity when hunting from a treestand. It consists of a belt that is worn around the hunter's waist and a strap that attaches to the tree. The purpose of the harness is to protect the hunter from a fall.

Steps: Steps are used to climb a tree to get up to a fixed treestand. The steps shown in the above image are a screw in type. They simply screw into the tree. They can be installed as the hunter climbs up and removed as the hunter climbs back down. Removing them prevents them from getting "lost" when the hunter is not using the tree. It also lessens the chance that another hunter will use your stand. There are steps that can be permanently fixed to the tree as well.

Rattling/Calling: Rattling is a process used to call in bucks. The hunter can use old antlers from a deer, synthetic antlers, or a "bag". To rattle, the hunter takes the antlers, one in each hand, and forcefully ram them together to imitate the sound of two bucks sparring. Some hunters will go to the extent of shaking bushes and stomping the ground in order to give the full effect. A curious buck nearby will hopefully recognize the commotion as two bucks fighting and will come to investigate. The "bag" is a bag that when shook makes the sound of antlers rattling together. Deer can be called with a grunt or deer call as well. This is usually a tube that the hunter blows into which mimicks the sound a doe, buck or fawn makes. I use the call mainly to calm a spooked deer.

Stalking/Driving: Stalking deer is a technique where the hunter walks through the woods slowly in order to come across deer. Driving is a technique where hunters work in a group of two or more. One hunter is stationed while the other hunter goes to the opposite side of the woods and walks toward the stationed hunter. The idea here is to move the deer towards the stationed hunter. A

deer can usually hear a hunter well before the hunter can see the deer and get close enough for a good shot. Bow-hunting is not meant for running deer. Stalking and driving deer most likely will result in running deer, a difficult shot even with a rifle.