

Improving Your 3-D Scores

First and foremost do a thorough check of your equipment and get tuned.

Take all your gear together with you with you shoot on the range. If you carry binoculars in the 3-D tournament, take them while practicing. If you have a fanny pack, wear it also. As much as possible and within reason, wear the same equipment as when you will use in the tournament. It can be a pain to carry some of those items on the practice range, but the key to archery is consistency, so make everything as consistent and familiar as possible.

Don't start flinging arrow after arrow on the practice range. Go to the practice area knowing your equipment is in good condition, well tuned, and you can hit the bullseye if you need to. There's no need to repeatedly shoot a helpless target butt with a bunch of dots on it.

Get ready for some serious practice. Remember this is going to be fun, but also remember you have to shoot each target with intense concentration as you would if you were shooting for a national championship. This is key to improving your shooting. When you shoot numerous arrows at the same target, concentration seems to drop. If you are able to maintain your focus as if shooting for the trophy, your practice time will be more productive.

Practice shooting from unmarked distances, not from marked stakes. Use your preferred range estimation method (e.g. the 10 yard method. Break down the distance in 10 yard increments. Use objects as reference points, like a tree or a bush. Say it's 10 yards from you to that tree, 10 more yards to that bush, and as the estimation nears the target estimate single yards at that point.

Next, and you've heard it many times before—pick a spot on your target. The spot will be dependent on whether your target is broadside, quartering, or at a different elevation. At this point you are ready to draw your bow, as you know the yardage and where you're going to aim. You then draw, place your sight on your spot, concentrate on making the best shot possible and, when you are ready, release the arrow. After releasing the arrow everyone wants to see where it's going, but just hold your form and follow through until you hear the arrow hit the target. Once you hear the arrow hit, you can then break form and check how well you did. Now here's another place to avoid a key practice error. Don't shoot this target again. You've made your one shot. While in the field, in real hunting situations, you usually only get one shot, so move on to the next target. You can come back later and shoot this target from a different location. If this is an organized shoot you usually only get one shot at each target anyway. This forces you to concentrate, knowing this is your one and only shot at this target from this location. It makes you elevate your mental focus for that one shot.