

BOW TUNING FOR HUNTING SEASON

Bowhunters should tune their bows to broadheads as soon as possible. PSE Hunting Advisor Steve Van Zile, recommends that you use a bow that maximizes your peak draw weight. For example, if you're comfortable drawing 60#, then choose a bow that peaks at 60#. That is, one with a 45-60# range--not a 60-75# range. Keep this in mind when you buy your next bow.

"Bowhunters should also make sure all their hunting equipment is attached to the bow before tuning begins--and then they should not make any changes. "Perfect" arrow flight can quickly go awry if at the last minute you switch from a cable slide to a speed slide, alter the angle of the cable guard, or even add some "muff" to the arrow rest.

"Finally," says Steve, "Bowhunters should sight their bows in only after achieving wobble free arrow flight. Trying to tune arrows to an existing set of sight pins is often nothing more than an exercise in futility."

Bowhunters should practice shooting at life-size animal targets, such as shooting in Skookum(s 3-D Saturdays. This helps them hone their yardage estimation skills, and teaches them to pick a spot before shooting. Too many deer are missed because an archer was deficient in either of these two skill areas.

"In addition, bowhunters should avoid head-on and quartering-in angles," says Steve, "and opt instead for a broadside or quartering-away shot. These latter two angles really expose the heart-lung region --especially if the deer's near fore leg is fully extended."

AFTER THE SHOT

Sometimes, the real hunt doesn't begin until after a broadhead has been released. The biggest mistake bowhunters make after taking that hard earned shot is going right after the deer. They see a lot of blood, and immediately assume their trophy is laying dead in the leaves some fifty or sixty yards away. Unfortunately, that's not always-the case. For example, the blood trail from a gut shot buck often peters out rather quickly. If you happen to push that deer too soon, he may just run off into a distant thick and disappear forever.

What should you do? Well, there is much disagreement as to what to do after a broadhead has drawn blood because every shot is a little different. There are however three key things you can do to minimize losing the blood trail altogether:

- Know where the vitals are BEFORE you shoot. Study charts and diagrams provided by your state's game department or hunter education programs. Be careful however with shots shown on various commercial hunting videos. Once in a while a gut shot or kidney shot is described incorrectly as a lung shot.
- Know where your arrow hit. Try to remember what the sight picture was before you released the arrow, and then imagine the arrow's entry and exit paths. Bright fletching/nocks can be helpful in this regard.

- Finally, if you are not sure where the arrow hit, WAIT at least a half hour before trailing. If you are an inexperienced tracker and don't find the deer with 150 yards, the best advice is get some experienced help.