



HUNTING AND GRUNTING

What is a Grunt Tube?

A Grunt Tube is a commonly found item in Wal-Mart's K-Mart's; Sport Shops and Pro Shops. It is used on deer in the same manner a duck call is used to call in ducks. It is usually plastic with an interior reed and a plastic flexible tube to direct the sound. In most grunt tubes the reed is accessible allowing you to change the pitch of the grunt from a deep pitch to a high pitch.

What does a grunt sound like?

A grunt sounds a lot like a soft pig grunt. The first time I heard a deer grunt I thought the farmer's pigs had escaped. If you want to hear what a grunt sounds like, click on the sound file above. The sound file above will play on almost all formats including all windows formats. The grunt sound file I included was recorded from my personal grunt tube. (No, I did not take the time to set up a recording studio in the woods to capture a huge 10 point in action.)

What is the purpose of a grunt?

A grunt is more common during the rut and infrequent during the other times of the year. Deer do not wander around the woods grunting at random like pigs do. The grunt is commonly used by bucks and less commonly by does. A doe will grunt at her fawns to keep them together. When a fawn starts to stray she will usually grunt them back to her. A buck's grunt however has a totally different meaning. A buck's grunt is mainly used to persuade the doe into mating. Similar to the stereotypical male that try's to sweet talk the prettiest woman at the bar, so is the grunt of the buck. Smaller bucks also understand the idea that a larger buck has priority over the does. Younger button or spike bucks will start chasing does earlier in the season than the older bucks will.

Younger bucks new to the rut do not quite understand what is happening yet and may start smelling the ground and grunting long before the older bucks do. However, when the older bucks start walking with their nose to the ground and grunting, then the rut is in or near full swing. When bucks are chasing does they become very vulnerable to hunters and cars. When they are in full rut, they are like a drug addict on cocaine. There is nothing that will stop them from finding a doe to mate. You may also notice that while hunting during the rut, bucks become almost ignorant to your movements and presence.

The only draw back to hunting bucks in the rut is their continual movement. You need to be accurate and quick on the draw when they start chasing does, because if they stop walking long enough for you to shoot, it will only be for a few seconds.

Why use a Grunt Tube?

A grunt tube is an excellent decoy. When you produce a grunt, the bucks in the area will become aware that something is going on which will peak their interest level. The grunts will create extreme jealousy in larger bucks causing them to almost "stampede" towards you. It is important, however, to not over grunt the bucks. Grunts will bring in almost any size buck, but mainly the bigger bucks. They cannot stand the fact that there could be a younger buck sweet talking a doe. Therefore the larger bucks will not resist the temptation to steal a doe away from a smaller buck. Since the smaller bucks know they will need to leave if a larger buck appears, the larger bucks will rarely hesitate to make a presence. When properly used, a grunt tube will stir extreme jealousy in big bucks.

How do I use a grunt tube?

When you are in your hunting position and you begin to grunt, the most important aspect is to realize that over grunting scares deer away. Usually 4 to 5 short muffled grunts every 15 minutes will do the trick UNTIL you see a buck. The grunts do not need to be loud. The grunts large and small deer make are soft and muffled. When I simulate a grunting buck, I will usually give 4 to 5 grunts in as many different directions around me as possible. I will usually space the grunts about 3 seconds apart and I will usually wait about 15 minutes between sets of grunts. The reason for waiting is in case a buck, that you may not see yet, heard you. If a buck did hear you, they may start a fast walk toward you. If you continue to grunt, without waiting 15 minutes between a series of grunts, the buck in your area will know it's not real and will disregard you.

AFTER you see a buck, wait until it his attention is turned in your direction and give one quick grunt. If their ears do not turn towards your direction, give another grunt about 5 seconds later but slightly louder. Continue cautiously (trying not to over grunt) until you see them turn their attention and ears in your direction. If they are looking for doe's and he is ready to mate the buck will begin staring in the direction the grunt came from looking for competing bucks. If the buck stares in your direction for 15 to 20 seconds but does not make a move towards you, give him one more short "muffled" grunt. You can achieve this muffled sound by either placing the grunt tube inside your jacket or by placing your glove over the end of the tube **MAKING SURE**, however, that it is soft. This will give the impression that the doe and the competing buck are moving away.

By this point the buck should start walking toward you. Once the buck starts walking toward you, **DO NOT** grunt anymore. The closer he gets, the better he can hear you and the more likely he may figure out that you are a fake. In addition, once they start walking towards you, their curiosity will continue to draw them in. If the deer hears you but begins walking away, try another quick loud grunt. If his interest now turns toward you, wait for his reaction. If he stares in your direction for 20 seconds for so, then give him the muffled grunt and watch his reaction. If the buck still does not respond he may not be in rut yet, or may have figured out that you are a fake. If you want a chance to practice these techniques, try it out on any buck you see. Don't always have the motive

to shoot the first deer you see. If you let many deer pass you by while trying different grunting techniques, you will learn first hand what works and what doesn't. Again the grunt tube is a very effective decoy to bring in the trophy bucks.