

## Practice Right When Time is Limited

I have learned that practicing right only takes a little time, and rewards you much quicker. Practice is not about how many arrows you are shooting. Practice is for perfecting your form, plain and simple.

**VISUALIZATION.** Before going out to practice, have a goal in mind. Not score, but form. Have an idea of what you want to work on that day. Maybe it's relaxing the bow arm or following through, whatever it is have a plan for the day. Try not to clutter your mind with too many things. Once you have your mind made up on what it is you will practice, take about 5-10 minutes and just visualize yourself performing the task. Visualizing only 10 minutes can be as effective as 100 arrows shot if done properly. Really see the shot and the technique, even feel the muscles working as you visualize. This sets your mind up and prepares the mind for the practice session, it knows what it will be working on.

**BLANK BALE.** After visualizing your shooting, step up to about 10-20 feet away from the target with the target face removed and shoot at a blank bale. Blank bale shooting allows your mind to really focus on the feel of the shot. Because there is no target, the mind is forced to work strictly on form. Continue to use your visualization through your blank bale shooting. Use the same images that you saw prior to shooting. I like to visualize a shot and then shoot one, visualize and then shoot another. You will be amazed how your body will pick up on what you are visualizing and incorporate it into your form. Shoot at least 20 arrows at the blank bale, but make sure with each arrow you are visualizing and trying to feel that aspect of your form that was the goal for the day.

**MOVE THE SIGHT.** After shooting blank bale move back to your desired distance and place the target face back on the target. Blank bale shooting is very valuable, but eventually you have to be able to transfer what you learned shooting at the blank bale to the target, this is not such an easy task. Don't be discouraged when the shots at a blank bale feel nothing like those you are shooting at a target. The whole goal is to get to the point that the shots at the target feel the same as those at a blank bale. If you get to this point then you have fully understood the concept that the arrow will only score better by shooting a good shot. When you shoot at a target try to get the shot to feel like the blank bale, etc. Always keep in mind that you are only working on one or two things on your form. Shoot about 50 arrows this way before moving your sight back to the middle.

**SCORING.** Scoring is merely a way to measure your results. Score at least one round every other time you practice. Scoring will put a little more pressure on you and it's good to see if you can transfer what you have worked on with the blank bale and the target shooting to shooting for score. Don't mistake of scoring every time you go out. The problem with this is you never free your mind up enough to work on improving your form.

Each of these types of practicing, visualization, blank bale, moving the sight and scoring, are ways to practice. Use any one of them alone and you're missing the boat. Use all of them together and watch how much quicker you can increase your scores. The key to good shooting is consistent, good form using the correct muscles. If you're out flinging arrows you will get consistent, I promise. The problem is you will be consistent with bad technique. Make your practices count, don't fling arrows, have a plan and understand why each part of the process is important.