

Aiming

Aiming is one of the steps in the process of shooting a good shot. Once it is learned, it should become a subconscious process. Aiming starts before you draw your bow and doesn't end until the arrow hits the target. Try to focus on the exact spot that you want your arrow to hit. Place your sight pin on it and then draw the bow. If you draw the bow with the sight pin several feet from the target, it requires more muscle movement and time to get the pin on the bullseye. The extra muscles used to move the pin will now have to be relaxed in order to execute a good shot.

After you are at full draw, relax all of the muscles except those necessary to maintain a steady, straight constant push on the bow arm and the muscles of the back that move the release arm backwards. Try relaxing the shoulder and arm muscles when at full draw. A technique is to act as if you want to hit someone with your elbow that is standing behind you. These are the same muscles needed for executing the shot.

Once your pin is on target and all of the muscles unnecessary for the shot execution are relaxed, start the back pressure for the release. As the back pressure begins, the pin movement decreases and the pin appears to lock on target. Many poor shots are made because the archer fails to maintain back pressure. When this happens the bow arm moves, resulting in a weak shot.

While focusing on the dot, allow your sight pin to settle in on it before starting the back pressure. Most top archers focus on the target, not the pin. If you focus on the pin, it will be like following a bouncing ball. The size of the sight pin or scope dot and the magnification of the scope differs from setup to setup. The best rule is to shoot the combination with which you feel the most relaxed when aiming. Remember, the smaller the sight pin and the higher the magnification on a scope, the more movement you will see when aiming. The duration of aiming time will vary among archers, but strive to maintain the same amount of time for each of your shots. If you release your arrow an average of eight seconds after coming to full draw, try to execute every shot within one second of that time. This is part of an individual's rhythm and should be maintained for good shooting form.

When shooting 3-D targets, train yourself to focus on the imaginary dot that is located in the center of the ten-ring. Concentrate on that spot and allow the pin to settle in on it. Relax all tense muscles unnecessary to the shot, apply back pressure and release the arrow. Keep focusing on the imaginary dot until after the arrow has hit the target. Do not attempt to watch your arrow flight, because that will require you to move your head and will result in a poor shot. Don't rush the shot but try to maintain your normal shooting rhythm. If negative thoughts enter the thinking process or you lose your concentration, do not shoot. If you hold at full-draw too long, do not shoot because your muscles will begin to tighten. Lower the bow, rest a few seconds, and start over.

It is impossible to hold the pin motionless, so try to hold it as close as possible to the imaginary dot. The more relaxed that you can keep your muscles, the less movement will appear with the pin. Focus not only on the spot you want to hit, but also concentrate on the steps of your shooting sequence. Aiming is just one of the steps in the equation of shooting a good shot.