

## Basic Archery Shooting Technique

A major part to success in archery is learning the proper shooting technique. With the proper shooting technique, your accuracy will greatly increase.

First, you need to choose the accessories that are most comfortable. Basic accessories could increase accuracy, such as the arm guard and the finger tab.

Common errors beginning archers make include overdrawing a short arrow, too long a draw, poor stance, poor anchor positions, poor vertical body alignments, rough release, improper follow-through, and little mental focus.

First, practice holding the bow and learn the correct positions. Don't worry about not hitting the target. Focus on the correct form and the follow through. Then, slowly develop your own mental program and positive mental habits. It is important for a good archer to stay focused and concentrate on their shots. So, you should practice and rehearse your mental program often. It will get you through the pressure and anxiety during your competition.

The body should be aligned according to the independent stances and must not lean or fall in one position.

The experienced archer knows that concentration and focus are the keys to success in competition. How do we keep our focus and concentration? Many elite archers would tell you that, "It's easy, but you need to develop your own shot sequence." A shot sequence is a set of procedures that the archer follows for each shot. The sequence should be practiced and rehearsed regularly so that it may become second nature and automatic. This will help the archer to be able to concentrate on aiming.

Here is an example of a generally accepted shot sequence.

### I. Stance

- A. Assume Stance
- B. Nock Arrow

### II. Draw and Aim

- A. Set bow hold
- B. Set draw hand hook
- C. Raise bow and draw
- D. Anchor
- E. Align sight and level bow
- F. Establish string pattern and sight picture
- G. Focus, steady, and aim

### III. Release and Follow Through

- A. Tighten back muscles
- B. Relax draw hand to release fingers, or use back tension to trigger release aid (if applicable)
- C. Keep bow arm up and steady

## I. Stances

### A. Assume Stance

The stances are important because the proper stance, means that archer will be able to distribute his/her body weight better. Proper stance keeps the archer's shot consistent. View the stances below and notice how each stance is different in the feet placement.

#### Pros and Cons to Certain Stances

Type of Stance	Pros	Cons
<u>Even Stance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural position</li> <li>Easy to reproduce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small base of support in the front-back plane.</li> <li>Body isn't sturdy, so it can move if in high winds</li> <li>Lowers area for string clearance, especially for large chested shooters.</li> </ul>
<u>Open Stance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives stable support base</li> <li>Reduces tendency to lean back from the target</li> <li>Easier to maintain back tension</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tends to make upper body twist towards target.</li> <li>Tends to use arm muscles more than back muscles to draw.</li> </ul>
<u>Close Stance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives stable support base</li> <li>Gives good alignment of the arm and shoulder in direct line to the target</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces string clearance, so string may strike against body.</li> <li>Tends to make archer lean away from target and overdraw the arrow.</li> </ul>
<u>Oblique Stance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gives the greatest amount of clearance for the bowstring when arrows is released.</li> <li>Body is in total equilibrium.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hard to maintain, so mainly used by expert archers.</li> </ul>

Target can be seen  
clearly.

To begin practice, the exact placement of the feet on the shooting line should be marked. Some archers would tell you that stance deviations of even a few inches can cause sighting and aiming problems, which then in return could lead to accuracy problems.

Based on the scientific criteria, the open and oblique stances are better. But don't base on your decision on just that. Individual choice is the pleasure of target archery.

Many archers prefer the even stance. In this stance, the archer's body weight is evenly distributed among both feet, and the heels and toes are aligned. The middle of the instep of the foot is aligned with the center of the target. However, the open stance is recommended for the beginning archer during their initial learning period. In this stance, the feet should be shoulder-width apart. It is recommended that the archer should distribute his/her body weight evenly on both feet. The left foot should be moved backwards approximately six inches, as shown in the picture in stances.

Some elite archers use the oblique stance. In this stance the archer places his/her toe of the left foot nearest the target on a line and pivoting the left foot forty-five-degrees to the target. The heel of the right foot is then placed in line with the toe of the left foot. This allows the bow arm to remain in a position where there will be optimum clearance of the bowstring when the arrow is released. The target should be seen clearly while using the oblique stance.

A closed stance. The shooting line is straddled and weight is evenly distributed among both feet. Left foot is moved forward a few inches so a heel-toe alignment exists between the left and right feet respectively.

## B. Nock Arrow

Nocking the arrow is the proper placement of the arrow in its shooting position on the bowstring. Shooting starts when the archer holds the bow next to the hip near the target.

Nocking begins when the archer has assumed his/her stance position. The arrow should be placed on the bowstring with the index feather upward at the serving. Note: Nocking points are placed slightly wider than the width of the arrow nock so adjustments can be made as needed. The traditional nocking angle can be seen in figure below. Notice that a ninety-degree angle is formed between the arrow and bowstring.

## II. Draw and Aim

### A. Bow Hold

Tip: Must keep fingers relaxed. Use the proper accessories, such as the arm guard. Hand pressure exerted high, low or on the bow's pivot point depending on the type of the bow and the archer.

The bow is placed only between the thumb and index finger. The index finger may wrap around the bow but it should not grip it. Keep all the fingers relaxed. When the archer becomes fatigued or loses concentration, there is a simple technique to relieve that problem. First, simply do a very slight counterclockwise rotation of the thumb against the bow handle while concurrently extending the thumb on forward toward the target. This technique is known as supination. Many archers use this technique mainly just to reduce their fatigue.

The palm of the hand should never apply pressure on the bow. Relaxation is the basic fundamental of target archery. Expert athletes know when to relax under critical circumstances. Your mental program should help you with this and, thus, greatly increases your accuracy.

## B. Draw Hand and Hook

**Drawing:** The act of pulling the bowstring to the anchor point on the archer's face. **Tip:** Controlled breathing is important. A system should be developed for each archer so that the breathing is calm and the arms are stable during the total drawing, aiming, and releasing period.

The traditional three-finger grip. Carefully study the picture for the proper form. Notice the relationship between the index and middle fingers and nock of the arrow. The position is hard to maintain as the pressure increases during the draw. The essence of the problem lies in the nature of the musculature within the hand.

Arrows will wave around and fall completely off the arrow rest as the draw is made if excessive finger pressure is on the arrow nock. When using a release aid, this problem could be eliminated. However, as a result, release aids tend to take a considerable amount of "sport" out of archery. That is one reason that target archery rules forbid the use of release aids. This challenges the archer to control their finger pressure on the nock during the draw and release. (Release aids are legal in other archery sports ).

## C. Raise Bow and Draw

Before raising the bow, body position should be aligned and already assume the proper stance. Then gently raise the bow and look at the target. This is called nocking. Then simply draw out the arrows and aim at the target.

## D. Anchor Point

Anchor Point is defined as the place on an archer's face where the hand is placed consistently with the bowstring at full draw. Proper and comfort anchor points could increase the archer's accuracy. It plays a great part in aiming and hitting the target. Anchor points are described as " high", or " low".

### Pros and Cons to Certain Anchor Points

Type of Anchor	Pros	Cons
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Low Anchor Point  
(Under Chin)

Two touch points  
provide consistency

Not comfortable for  
archers who have larges  
hands or short necks.

Stops overdrawing

Takes time to position

Low placement on face  
allows for long distances  
shots with less sight  
movement.

Tips head.

Side Anchor Point

Quick position  
established

Allows overdrawing

Permits creeping

High Anchor Point  
(Release Aid)

Allows archers to  
partially sight down the  
arrow shaft and over the  
point if a bowsight is not  
being used.

Don't have bowsight.

The anchor point on or under the jaw bone is termed low. An anchor point on or near the bone inferior and also lateral to the eye is considered high.

Depending on the facial contour and type of shooting, anchor points could differ among different archers. Many field archers, bow hunters, and instinctive shooters use the high anchor point. View the pictures and practice to see which anchor point best suits you. Now don't worry about it if you can not determine your best fit anchor point. Often, that as many beginners progress, they will feel the differences in the different anchor points and figure out which one they would like to use. The low anchor point is commonly recommended for beginning target archers.

E. Align sight and level bow

When the bow is drawn, the sight level and bow level must be aligned properly to achieve maximum accuracy. Poor alignment could occur due to fatigue or possibly bad habit in practice. To reduce this problem, beginners should rehearse the correct bow alignment and choose the bow weight that best suits each individual. Small women should use a bow around 25-30 pounds of draw weight. Men could use up to 35 pounds.

F. Establish string pattern and sight picture

To increase accuracy. A young archer should never forget the importance of the proper string pattern and sight picture. First always mentally picture and visualize the target. Then assume the proper stance and arm yourself with the necessary gear for the draw. Check your nocking position and align your body position correctly.

G. Focus, steady, and aims

Once you have assume your stance and body alignment, then it's time to really focus. Steadily keep your bow hold position and aim at the target. During this whole process, keep the hand as steady as possible. If your bow starts to tremble the moment you lift it up, then that bow is too heavy for you. You must at least keep your bow from trembling for at least 5 seconds.

### III. Release and Follow Through

Releasing the arrow properly is the most important fundamental in shooting. To follow through simply means to hold the release position until the arrow is safely launched onto the target. The key elements of success are: (1) Relaxation (2) and concentration. Here is a example of a good follow through: (1) The fingers on the bowstring hand are relaxed, (2) head and eyes are turned toward the target following the flight of the arrow,(3) the bow arm is extended toward the target, and (4) the bow hand is gripping the bow with the help of a sling. The bow sling is designed to help the archer during the release and follow through. There are three basic types of bow slings available (finger, wrist, bow). Any one of the bow sling will help the archer keep the bow from falling to the ground after the release.

The elbow of the bowstring arm should not extend appreciably after or during the release. The natural recoil reaction will occur after the release, but the beginner should avoid the habit of trying to release the arrow by hyper-extending the wrist or roll off the fingertips under its own pressure.

#### A. Tighten back muscles

From this point on, it's basically time to shoot your first arrow. Tighten your back muscles and draw the bow string. Keep your back and arms straight at the target. Like any sports. Archery also requires some muscle strength. Exercise regularly to improve your strength in both arms and back. This could help in improving beginners physical strength which will help them draw.

#### B. Relax draw hand to release

Keep your bow hold easy and relaxed. Never grip the bow too tightly. Your palm should only gently touch the nock. This could also reduce fatigue.

#### C. Keep bow arm up and steady

Once the arrow is released, you must still keep both of your hands and arms steady even after the release of the arrow, otherwise, the arrow might not be accurate after the release.

As a new archer evolves, he/she might find new techniques and skills. These recommended techniques are based on generally accepted practice. Various champions have used different techniques. What is essential is that the shot sequence be duplicated shot after shot. In archery, consistency is the name of the game.