

## **Breathing and Shot Execution**

By Don Morrison

There are several theories as to how to breathe during your shot execution to maximize your chances for the X-ring. Some of the theories were spelled out in an article in Archery Focus magazine by Leighton Tyau. One theory holds that the archer should breathe in during the draw and exhale half-way after reaching full anchor, as this enhances relaxation and facilitates aiming. Another theory has the archer breathing in during the pre-draw phase and exhaling during the draw. A third theory holds that you should breathe in before the draw, and exhale after full draw. You must keep some of your breath in the lungs, that is you exhale until your lungs reach natural air content. To do this, breathe in deeply and then relax the diaphragm letting the air out naturally rather than forcefully. A fourth theory is not to think about breathing at all, as it is part of your natural everyday existence. Your shot execution should be as natural as possible, and deliberately changing your breathing pattern during your shot is un-natural and thus difficult to duplicate the same on each shot.

An advantage of the first theory is that you will feel a sense of strength during the draw and, in theory, be able to execute the draw with strength. In addition, the exhalation strength that continues through the draw phase. Upon reaching the transfer/loading phase the out breath relaxes the archer, facilitating aiming. Deliberate exhaling relaxes the body. The first method is very difficult. You must breathe in while the muscles are under strain. As for the second and third methods, both are well argued and each has their advantages. If the out breath occurs right before the aiming period, it provides for a more stable shot. Try all four methods and see which helps you shoot better.

Most adults do not use the full capacities of our lungs to breathe, using only a fraction of the available lung capacity. If you watch a child or sleeping adult breathe, you will notice that the stomach moves in and out. This in-out motion is due to the diaphragm expanding and contracting allowing the lungs to reach their full capacity. In order to breathe like this, you must relax your abdominal muscles, let your stomach expand and think of breathing down into your stomach. With enough practice, you will be breathing like this regularly.