

Archery Fitness Q & A

Q. Sometimes I get very tired, and my arms and legs feel like lead. What's happening?

A. When temperatures are extremely high – in the mid -90`s – with high humidity, you get tired easily. The effects of high heat and humidity on the body can be very dangerous. It is imperative to monitor your hydration levels when shooting in high heat situations. Dehydration is a major factor in serious heat related illnesses. All archers should continually be drinking water under these conditions. If you are thirsty, you are already behind the hydration curve. In these conditions, it is also important to monitor your food intake. A steady intake of proteins, carbohydrates, and fat are important to maintaining your health. Sitting in the shade, placing cool towels around your neck, wearing light colored clothing, and minimize your clothing will all help in keeping your body temperatures down as will eating cool foods and drinking cool water. Avoid caffeine and carbonated beverages.

The other factor affecting archers in high heat situations is physical conditioning. A well conditioned athlete will withstand the affects of the heat better than will out-of-shape archers. Of particular importance is cardiovascular conditioning.

Q. I have had a pain in my shoulder for about six months. It started only occasionally but now it is constant. What should I do?

A Pain is never normal. Pain that persists or increases in severity must be explored by a qualified medical professional. Shoulder problems in archers are common. A frequent ailment is shoulder impingement syndrome. This occurs when soft tissue in the shoulder becomes pinched between hard tissue. A second common ailment is a rotator cuff injury. The rotator cuff consists of four muscles– supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor, subscapularis. These muscles stabilize the shoulder joint. The tendons attaching these muscles to the bone structure can be torn, rubbed, and inflamed. Inflammation causes pain. A qualified medical professional can diagnose the cause of the injury and recommend rest, therapy, or surgery. If you try to "muscle" through the pain, you risk permanent, irreversible injury.